Would you like to buy a pair of spectacles?—*See page* 16.

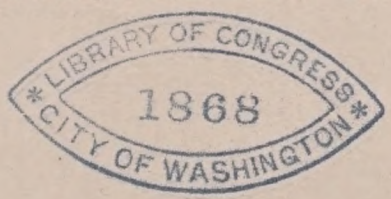

THE
MAGIC SPECTACLES
A FAIRY STORY.

THE

MAGIC SPECTACLES.

By CHAUNCEY GILES.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAPMAN.



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THE MAGIC SPECTACLES.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAGICIAN.—THE SPECTACLES.

Two children were sitting one summer's evening on the piazza of a house in a quiet street in the city of New York. They were brother and sister. George had been trying to do a long sum in his arithmetic lesson, but he had not succeeded very well, for it required more patience than he was disposed to give it. Clara had been reading a story about fairies. As it was now getting too dark to read or study, George threw down his slate, with disappointment at not being able to get the right answer to his sum, and said, with impatience :—

"I do not see what use there is in having such

long and hard sums. I wish there was no such thing as arithmetic. See there," he said, showing his slate to his sister; "I have covered the whole of this side and a part of the other with figures, and I have not got the answer right, after all my care and trouble."

"You must get a fairy to help you," said Clara, in a half-playful, half-musing mood.

"A fairy!" replied George, with much contempt. "You are always talking about fairies, when you know there are no such things. O, yes, I think I will," he said, his countenance brightening up, while a smile played around his lips, as though some funny idea was about to break out into speech. "I know a fairy who can help me, though he don't look very fairy-like. My fairy is Tom Jones."

"Tom Jones!" exclaimed Clara; "that big, rough fellow, with heavy boots, and hard, clumsy hands! Think of him skipping around among the flowers, flying here and there and everywhere, without be-

ing heard or seen! It is too absurd!" And she laughed outright.

"It may be that he could not skip about much," said George, "but it is not a hopping and skipping and hide-and-go-seek fairy that I want. I want a steady and useful one, if any. Tom Jones is the fairy that can help one in arithmetic, let me tell you. His fingers skip about fast enough when he is doing sums. He knows more about arithmetic than any boy in school. I do believe some real fairy must help him, if there are any such creatures, and I know there are not. He seems to see right through a sum in a minute, and he always gets the right answer. Then he is so good-natured about helping one; he seems to like to do it. He is not like your fairies, that are always teasing and tormenting and playing tricks upon one. He is a real good substantial fairy. Yes, Tom Jones is my fairy."

"Well, he is not very fairy-like in appearance, certainly," said Clara. "But would n't it be so nice if

there were real fairies like those we read about, who could do wonderful things for us? If you got into difficulty, your fairy would always be at hand to help you out. If you wanted anything, just say some magical word, and she would be present with whatever you wanted. You could go anywhere, or do anything you pleased, without any trouble."

"Yes, I think it would be splendid," said George. "But do you suppose there ever were any such strange and wonderful beings as we read about in stories?"

"Indeed I do," replied Clara. "But it was a great while ago when they lived. They all seem to have gone away from the earth now."

"Well, I do n't believe there ever were any such beings anywhere," said George. "All the things that are said about them in the books we read are nothing but stories that somebody made up. Tom Jones is my fairy, after all."

"But how could they make up the stories about fairies, if there had never been any?" asked Clara.

"Why," said George, "you can imagine anything you please. It is as easy to imagine fairies as anything else."

"Could you, if you had never heard of any such beings, or any like them?" asked Clara. "Try to think of something that nobody ever saw or heard of, or that never existed in any form."

This was something George had never thought of before. He sat a few moments, trying to do the impossible thing, and when he found he could not, he said, "I cannot; but some persons may be able to do it, for all that. I cannot do all my sums, but my fairy can."

So the children went on chatting until the light had nearly faded from the west, and the very time for fairies to appear, if there were any, had come. The chatting ceased, and they were about to go into the house, when they thought they heard one of the street cries. They both listened. It sounded a little like "blackberries."

"What is it?" asked Clara, in a half whisper, as though she was almost afraid to speak aloud. They had been talking about ghosts and fairies until Clara could almost see them about her.

"Oh, it is nothing but the old blackberry woman," replied George. "She cannot have had as good luck to-day as usual, or she would not be out so late. She usually sells out long before this time. There it is again! It sounds much clearer now. I am quite sure it is she; and she is coming this way. Let us wait and buy some, and help the old lady a little. Perhaps she may be 'a fairy in disguise,'" he continued, in a jocose way, "and if we are kind to her she may do some wonderful thing for us,—give me a wishing-hat, and you a magical ring, or some such wonderful talisman."

"Who knows," said Clara, "but what she may!"

Her imagination was so excited by what she had been reading, and by the conversation, that she

would not have been surprised to see some wonderful being come up and speak to her.

"If she only brings some good ripe blackberries, I shall be content for the present," said George.

The cry continued, and seemed to come nearer. The children both listened.

"The cry is not 'blackberries,' after all," said George, in a doubtful tone; "I wonder what it can be. It sounds like 'spectacles.' That is it, I do believe. Hark! 'Spec-ta-cles! Spec-ta-cles!' that is it, as sure as the world. There it is again."

"Spec-ta-cles," came sounding through the streets in a clear, shrill, and prolonged tone. "Spec-ta-cles! Make old eyes as good as new."

"How strange, that any one should be around selling spectacles at this time of the day!"

He had hardly said this, before a sprightly old man, with bright black eyes, and a pleasant smile about his mouth, came along with a box in his hand, and seeing George and Clara on the piazza, he

opened the gate, and came directly up to them, at the same time addressing them in a pleasant tone.

"Good evening, children! Would you like to buy a pair of spectacles? They will make old eyes as good as new."

George and Clara both laughed at the idea of wearing spectacles.

"Our eyes are very good," said Clara. "We are not quite so old as you seem to think. I am afraid we could not see as well with your spectacles as without them."

"O, yes, you can. You can see much better," said the old man. "I can fit young eyes and old, blue eyes and brown, black eyes and gray. Will you try a pair?" And he set down his box, which the children noticed was very much like a book in shape, as if he intended to open it.

"We will not trouble you to open it," said George, "for I am quite sure we shall not buy any, unless you have a pair that will help me to see through my

sums in arithmetic. If you have, perhaps we might make a trade."

"Just the thing, exactly," said the old man. "I have a plenty of them that will fit all eyes, and help everybody to understand everything that it will be useful for them to know. A boy by the name of Jones got a pair of me a few years ago, and he is said to be a first-rate scholar now."

"What Jones?" inquired George, with great eagerness. "Was it Thomas Jones?"

"Yes, that was his name. Do you know him?"

"O, yes!" said George. "And he often shows me how to get my sums."

George now began to take a deep interest in the spectacles. Perhaps there might be something in what the old man said, after all. It did seem perfectly wonderful how easily Tom Jones could do sums that it was impossible for him to do. If he could get something that would help him to do as

well as Tom did, he would be perfectly delighted, and he began to think seriously of buying a pair of the old man's spectacles. But, then, he thought they must be very dear, and he might not be able to buy them after all. Still there would be no harm in asking the price. While he was thinking a moment what it would be best to do, the old man turned to Clara, and said:—

"I have a pair for you, too, Miss Clara."

"No, I thank you. I have no sums to trouble now," she replied. "But how did you know that my name is Clara? I think you never saw me before."

"No, I never did," replied the mysterious man. "But I have a pair of spectacles which enables me to see the names of everybody I wish to know. Your name, my little man, is George Field, I perceive. The spectacles are very wonderful and very useful. Will you buy a pair?"

The children looked at each other with much surprise, and Clara became a little frightened. She

began to fear that he might be some wizard who had come to harm them. But when she looked up to his face, he smiled as if he knew her thoughts, and he appeared to be so pleasant and kind, that she felt quite sure he did not intend to do them any injury. Her fears being quieted, she was disposed to talk more with him.

"Those must be very strange spectacles," she said. "Have you any that will help little girls to get any lesson, to sew, and to do any kind of work?"

"Yes, indeed," said he. "Put on a pair, and you can see perfectly how to do everything that it is your duty to do."

"In the dark, too?" said George, in an incredulous tone.

"Yes, you can see some things as well, and a little better, in the dark than in the light."

The interest of both George and Clara was now much excited. What the old man told them about the quality of his spectacles seemed absurd and im-

possible; and yet there was something so kind and gentle in his manner; he was so bright and earnest, and apparently sincere, that they could not resist the conviction that there must be some truth in what he said. Clara, who was impulsive, and somewhat credulous and imaginative, was ready to believe that a real fairy had appeared to her, and in her quick and ardent fancy she was already beginning to picture the splendid results that would flow from it. She was willing to give everything in her possession for a pair of spectacles that would work such wonderful effects. But George was naturally skeptical and cautious; and though he was almost convinced of the truth of what the magician told him, and eagerly alive to the great value of such a pair of spectacles, yet he wanted to be sure that it was not all a delusion, before he purchased a pair. He thought if he could try on a pair, and see for himself, he would be certain not to be deceived. So he said:—

"Perhaps you will let me put on a pair of your magical glasses, and try them."

"Certainly, my little man, with all my heart; you may try them as long as you please; and if you do not like them, and if they do not help you to see all I have promised, you will be the first person who has ever found them to fail."

But still George had some misgivings about trying them. How strange he would look with spectacles on! What would his father and mother and his companions at school say to him? Besides, they might have some bad effect upon his eyes, so that he would have to wear them all the time or he could not see anything.

While these doubts were passing in his mind, the old man was feeling in his pockets for the key to his little box. As soon as he found it, he unlocked the box and raised the lid. A strange and bright light flashed from it, which seemed to make the space around them bright. The children both

started, and looked into the box with the most intense curiosity. But they could see nothing like spectacles. The old man seemed to be busily engaged in examining the different apartments of the box, and acted as though he was turning over various things, though the children could see nothing but a bright glare of light. At last the old man cried out, briskly:—

"Here they are! here is a pair that will fit you exactly. Just the thing for you! They will suit the color and form of your eyes, and, what is much better and more important, they will suit your mind." And he went through all the motions of opening a pair of spectacles, and wiping the glasses with a piece of cloth. Then, stretching out his hand to George, he said:—

"Here, my little fellow, try these; I think they will make everything look bright and clear."

But George could see nothing in his hand; and after looking at it a moment, he said:—

"I cannot see any spectacles in your hand."

"Can't you? Can't you see anything in my hand? Look sharp, now!"

"No," replied George; "I can't see anything. There is not anything in your hand."

"There," said the little man, "they will fit you exactly. They are perfectly transparent, and you can see through them, and not see them. Now I will put them on."

The old man approached him, and rubbed his forehead, and passed his hands several times over his eyes, and then passed them around to his ears. At first, George thought he was putting something into them, and then the feeling changed into a sound, which seemed to penetrate to his brain, and down to his very heart.

"There," said the man, "they are safely and securely on."

"But I don't see any spectacles, nor can I feel any," said George, putting his hand up to his eyes.

"No, I think not; the spectacles are not on your nose. They are worn inside of your eyes, and of course no one can see them, nor can you feel them. There was no way of getting them into their proper place but through your ears. They are magical spectacles, and you will find them so, I assure you."

George opened and shut his eyes, and put his hand to them, and to his ears, and looked at this thing and that. He thought everything looked some brighter, though he was not quite sure. Indeed, the whole affair had turned out so different from what he expected, that he hardly knew whether he was awake or in a dream. He must be under the influence of some magical power.

The magician now turned to Clara, and said, very pleasantly:—

"Now let us get a pair for you."

He examined her eyes very carefully, and asked her some questions about what she liked and disliked to

do; and then went to his box, and hunted it over as before. In a little while he turned round before her, and holding out his open hand, he asked her "how she liked the looks of those?"

"I cannot see anything at all," she replied, "but your hand. There is not anything in it."

"Then they will fit you exactly," he said; "for if you could see the spectacles, you could not see anything else clearly. They would not fit you."

He then proceeded to put them on, in the same way as he had done to George. Clara rather shrank from the operation at first. But his voice was so pleasant, and his manner was so kind and gentle, that her fears were soon quieted, and she stood quite still while he was putting the spectacles in their place. When this was accomplished,

"There they are," he said. "Now you are all right, and you can see as well as the keenest-sighted."

"But I do not see anything wonderful," said

Clara, looking around. "I cannot see any better than I could before."

"Neither can I," said George, with some disappointment in his tone.

"No," replied the little magician, "I know you cannot, and you do not need any aid from the spectacles now. You can see well enough without them. They were not made to help those who wear them, when they do not need any help, but only when they do need it. This is one of their excellent and wonderful qualities. You do not want any one to assist you in doing those sums that you can easily work out yourself, do you, George?"

"No, indeed," he replied. "There are a great many sums that I can do easily enough, and there is real fun in doing them when the answer comes out right; and there are many other things that I would not thank any fairy to help me to do."

"Which do you like to do best, easy or hard things?" asked the spectacle man.

"O, when I can do hard things, I like to do them a great deal better than I do easy things," replied George. "But when you try, and try, and then can't succeed, it is real discouraging."

"So it is, so it is," said the old man, in a kind, sympathizing tone; "and the magical spectacles are made to help you in seeing how to do hard things; how to get hard lessons, and do unpleasant things."

"That will be splendid," said Clara.

The old man now stood looking at George and Clara, with a pleasant smile upon his homely face, as if he was trying to penetrate into their inmost hearts, or waiting for them to say or do something more.

George recollected now, that nothing had been said about the price of the spectacles. He had been so absorbed in the process of putting them on, and in the expectation of their magical effects, that he had forgotten to ask the price. Perhaps the old man might be waiting for his pay. So he said:—

"You have not told us the price of the spectacles

yet; perhaps we can't buy them, after all, and you will have to take them back."

"I can't take them back," said the old man, with more seriousness than he had shown before. "I can't take them back; when they are put on, and fit as I see yours do, they can never be taken off. You must always wear them."

George and Clara were both quite terrified at this. The old man might have done something to gain a magical power over them, and make them his slaves, or do them some great harm.

He seemed to read their thoughts, for he said:—

"No, you cannot take them off. But don't be afraid, they will not hurt you, and I see plainly that you will some time regard them as of priceless value." His manner was so earnest and sincere and kind that the fears of the children were quieted, and George said:—

"Well, what is the price? How much do you ask for these spectacles? I am afraid we cannot pay for them if they are so valuable."

"I ask a great price, a very great price!" said the old man. "But they are worth it, and a thousand times more."

George and Clara both became satisfied now, that they had done a very foolish thing in permitting him to put the spectacles on. It might take all their father was worth, and more too, to pay for them; but there was no help for it now, and they might as well put a bold face upon the matter.

"Well, how much is it?" asked George.

"A great price! a very great price! and I am afraid you will not always be willing to give it."

"I will give you all I can," said George.

"Will you? will you?" asked the old man, quickly. "That is all I want. That is enough. 'All you can!' That is all I ask. Give me your life. I ask your life." And he spoke it with a sternness he had not shown before.

The children were both terribly frightened at this demand. They could not run nor cry out, but stood

pale and silent before the old man, who drew himself up erect, and looked at them for a moment with a keen and piercing glance. Then his face relaxed into a gentle and winning smile, as he said:—

"Don't be alarmed, children; I would not hurt you for the world. You must give me your life. But I do not mean by that to kill you. I only mean that you must use the spectacles as I tell you; and, if you do, it will be more for your advantage than for mine. All I ask is, that you remember what I am going to tell you now, and obey it."

The children drew a long breath of relief, and in the same earnest voice, said:—

"What is it, sir?"

"You must not forget," he said, "that the spectacles will never help you to see anything that you can see well enough without them. Nor will they help you in anything, unless you try to help yourselves. That would do you more harm than good. When you find anything hard to understand, or any duty

hard to do, remember to look at one thing at a time. One thing at a time, is the first rule. If you try to see too many things at once, the glasses will get blurred, and the images will be confused. Then you must look closely and steadily at the one thing, until you see through it. Be patient and persevere. Remember that. Even with the aid of magical spectacles, no one can at once see through everything that is worth knowing. Look sharp, be patient, and persevere, and every lesson and every duty will become easier and more pleasant. Now, remember. One thing at a time. Look sharp. Be patient, and persevere, and you will find that the glasses will work wonders. That is all I ask. Give your life to these rules, and you will pay me a thousand times. You will never see me again; but I shall see you, and help you all I can."

So saying, he bid the children good evening with a pleasant smile, ran down the steps in a very sprightly manner, and soon George and Clara heard the cry again.

"Spec-ta-cles! Spec-ta-cles! Buy my spec-ta-cles! Make old eyes as good as new!" The sounds grew fainter and fainter until they finally died away, and they could hear them no more.

Just at this time, their mother came out and said:—

"O, here you are; I have been hunting all around for you. The bell rang for tea long ago. Did you not hear it?"

George and Clara both rubbed their eyes, and yawned, as though they had been asleep. They got up immediately, and followed their mother into the house. They were both silent and abstracted during tea, and looked at each other, and at everything around them, in a rather singular manner. Their mother thought their silence and rather wild appearance was owing to their having fallen asleep on the piazza, and they were not yet fully awake. She supposed they had become very tired, as children often do at school, and she advised them to go to bed and

sleep it off, and they would wake in the morning as bright as ever.

They did as their mother told them, each one thinking about what had happened, and hardly knowing whether it was a reality or a dream. Everything was so clear and vivid in their minds, they thought it must be a reality, and yet they were not quite sure. Each one looked in the mirror to see if there was any appearance of spectacles about their eyes; but they could discover none. They opened and shut them, but they could perceive no difference from their ordinary state, either in appearance or feeling, or in their ability to see, and they both concluded it must have been a dream. They resolved, however, to talk it over with each other in the morning, and see whether it was a dream or not. For it would not be possible for both to dream exactly the same thing; and with this resolution they both went to bed, and slept soundly until morning.

CHAPTER II.

WAS IT A DREAM OR REALITY?—DETERMINATION TO TEST IT. — TOM JONES. — THE FIRST TRIAL. — ITS RESULTS. — SECOND TRIAL. — DOUBTS. — FINAL SUCCESS.

As soon as they saw each other in the morning, George said to Clara:—

"Did I go to sleep last night on the piazza?"

"I don't know," replied Clara. "Did I?"

"I don't know," said George. "Either you did, or I did, or we both did, or we did not."

"That is very evident," replied Clara. "I think you must have been looking through magical glasses, to see anything so clearly."

"Magical glasses!" said George. "What do you know about magical glasses?"

"Know?" said Clara. "Didn't the old blackberry woman change into an old man, who was a great magician, or a beautiful fairy; and didn't the blackberries become magical spectacles; and didn't the great magician, or beautiful fairy, put the spectacles into our eyes, instead of giving us the blackberries to put into our mouths? Didn't he tell us that they would help us to see everything, and do everything? Either he did, or he didn't, or I dreamed it."

"Did you dream it, or was it really so?" asked George, with much earnestness.

"Yes," replied Clara.

"You provoking girl," said George; "now tell me truly."

"Did you see the old man, or did you not? Did he give you a pair of magical spectacles, or did he not?" asked Clara.

"Yes," said George; and they both laughed aloud at their mutual ignorance and confusion.

"But honestly," said George, "either an old man did give, or pretend to give, me a pair of magical spectacles, or I dreamed it."

And Clara replied: "Honestly, either an old man did give, or pretend to give, me a pair of magical spectacles, or I dreamed it; but which I cannot tell."

After much mutual explanation and discussion, they found that they had both dreamed exactly the same dream, or that an old man had really appeared to them, and pretended to give each one of them a pair of magical glasses. But which it was, they could not exactly tell.

"There is one way," said George, "by which we can tell whether it was a dream or not, and I propose we try it."

"What is that?" said Clara.

"We will do just what the old man told us to, and then we can tell whether there is anything in it or not. Will you?"

"Yes," said Clara, "for if we have such a won-

derful present, it would be too bad not to derive any benefit from it."

So they went to school, each one musing on the dream, or the real appearance of a fairy, they hardly knew which. There was something so interesting in the thought that they might have come into possession of such a wonderful gift, that they were strongly inclined to think it could not be all a dream, and they both determined to follow the directions. Certainly no harm could come from doing this, and if there was any truth in it, they were very fortunate children indeed.

On his way to school, George overtook Tom Jones. The moment he saw him, he called out, "Hello, Tom! stop, I want to tell you something."

"Well, what is it?" said Tom, as George came running up. "Want me to show you how to do a sum?"

"No, not yet; I want to tell you that I have found you out."

"Found me out? What do you mean by that? What have you found out?"

"I have found out how you always get your sums in arithmetic."

"If you have," Tom replied, "perhaps you will know how to get yours, and will not come to me for help any more. But how is it?"

"I know who helps you," said George.

"You do! Well, who is it? I should like to know, myself," said Tom, in a half-mocking tone.

"Well, I can tell you. It is the old man who sells magical spectacles, that show how to do everything."

"What nonsense! You are joking. You must have eaten something funny for breakfast."

"No, indeed, I am not in fun, but in solemn earnest. And you need not deny it now, for I saw the old man, and he told me so himself. He said he knew you very well; that he gave you a pair of magical spectacles, and that that was the reason you saw through your sums so quick."

"Well, if that is so, I advise you to get a pair, and wear them, too," said Tom, with a good-natured smile.

"I did get a pair," said George, "and I intend to wear them, or else I dreamed I did."

"Don't you know whether it was a dream or not?"

"No, I don't. If it was a dream, it was a very strange one, and so much like reality that I cannot tell whether it was a dream or not. And besides, if it was a dream, Clara and I dreamed exactly the same dream, the same night."

"That was queer," said Tom, showing more interest than he had done before. "But I should think you would know whether you had the spectacles or not. Let's see them. Put them on if you have them."

"That's the mischief of it," said George. "He said we could not see them, and that they were not worn on the nose, but on the inside of the eyes."

"Well, that's a funny place to wear spectacles," said Tom; "of course you dreamed it. I guess the

only way you will ever get any lessons by the help of such spectacles will be by dreaming them out. But if you don't get them, the scolding you will catch won't be a dream; and the examination won't be a dream, either, you may be sure of that."

"But didn't the old man give you a pair?" asked George, with much earnestness. "He told me he did."

"I don't know anything about any old man. But I've got a fairy worth two of yours, and a pair of spectacles worth a dozen of yours."

"What are they, and where did you get them?"

"My spectacles are my two good eyes, and my fairy is patience and hard work," said Tom. "But come on. We must hurry to school, or we shall find a fairy that is not so very fair, who has a wand that Jim Tinker did not think was a dream, the other day. I'll bet a cent he will make a pair of spectacles of us that can be seen, and that will not be a very pleasant sight, either, if we don't hurry on."

George was well aware of this, and the boys ran on together, reaching the school-house just as the last bell was ringing. George went to his seat, took his books out of his satchel, put everything in its place, and prepared to go to work with his new spectacles, or no spectacles, he did not know which.

The sum which he had tried, in vain, to do the night before, was still on his slate. He looked at the long rows of figures, and the wrong answer, and thought to himself, "Now I will try to do my best, and I shall very soon find out whether the magic spectacles are a dream or not. Wouldn't it be glorious if the old man should prove to be a reality, and the spectacles as magical and useful as he described them! I would show the boys a thing or two!"

He rubbed out his figures and began anew.

"Let us see," said he. "What did the old man say? We must do 'one thing at a time;' 'be patient and persevere.' Well, that's not bad ad-

vice, anyhow, spectacles or no spectacles, and I will give it a trial. 'One thing at a time.' Well, then, I will be sure to see what the sum is before trying to do it. Yesterday, I remember, I worked a long time on a sum, and could not get the answer; and when I took it to Tom, he said, 'Why, you little fool, you haven't the right sum. You've got a part of two sums.' And sure enough, I had. I wonder if I did not make some such blunder last night."

He began to read over the sum very carefully, word by word, sentence by sentence. "There," he said to himself, "I did make a mistake; I thought that four was a seven. Thank you, old gentleman; you have helped me some already!" He read the sum over twice, very carefully, and then set it down on his slate, comparing figure with figure. "One thing at a time," thought he. "Yes, that's so. Well, now I must multiply by that great number of figures. How many are there? Nine. Oh,

dear! I can never do it, and get every one right. I shall be sure to make some mistake, I know. But, 'One thing at a time.' 'Patience.' That is what my fairy said. Well, now, here goes. 'One thing at a time.'" And he began to multiply with great care, and kept on until he had multiplied by every one of the nine figures in the multiplier.

"Not so great a task, after all," thought he. "But now I must add them up. That's a big job. I am afraid I shall make some mistake. But, 'one thing at a time' and 'persevere.' Oh, yes. Well, now go ahead. Nine and two are eleven. That's easy. 'One thing at a time.' How's that, my fairy? That rule won't always work; I must take two at a time when I add."

So he went on joking with the old man, as though he was present, and almost before he was aware of it, the columns were added up. "I'll bet you that is right. Well, now, 'one thing at a time.' What next?

Oh, botheration ; I have got to divide, and I always make mistakes in division. But, go ahead is the word, and go ahead it is."

He went through with his division with the greatest care, but much sooner than he expected. By being careful to take one step at a time, and to think of only one thing at a time, he did not get puzzled, as he sometimes did. Every step was distinct and clear. "I do believe there is something in the spectacles," thought he. "Take care, Tom Jones, I will show you that my fairy is no dream, yet."

"Now, what's the next step? 'Look sharp.' Oh, I see, as clear as day." And he went on as gayly as though he was at play. As he approached the end, however, he began to tremble, he was so much excited. "If it does come out right, I shall begin to believe there is really something in the spectacles." When he got the first figure in the last step, he was almost afraid to look at the answer. He opened his book, and glanced sideways at it, as though he wished to

catch a glimpse of it. A full view would be too great a disappointment if it was not right.

"Three, three, as sure as you are alive. Ho, ho, my little gentleman, thank you! But you had better not crow till you are out of the woods. Two, —two. That's the way to do it. I'll bet an eggshell against a million of dollars that the next figure will be right. Who takes the bet? Six, six. That's it. The eggshell is mine, and the million of dollars I'll take when my fairy gives them to me. Now for the next. Right. Good for you. Who says I can't see?"

So he rattled on to himself in an excited, jubilant manner, until he came to the last figure. "There it is, all right. Spec-ta-cles, spec-ta-cles," he cried in thought, imitating the prolonged cry he had heard the night before. "Yes, sir. I can see a thing or two as well as the next man, if he is blind."

Exulting with his success, he did one sum after another, without making a mistake. He seemed to

be able to see right through them the moment he looked at them, and he could multiply and divide, and perform all the operations, with the greatest accuracy and rapidity. He had now come to the last sum. When he had read it over he thought, "Ah, there's a tough fellow for you! The boys all said nobody in the class could do that sum but Tom Jones. Now let us see. 'One thing at a time.' There's the first step. That is clear enough. So's the next. Ah, there's that compound fraction, and those mixed numbers. But one thing at a time, and perhaps I shan't get mixed. I will begin it, and go as far as I can. Now, spectacles, show your magic!"

He put down the sum and began. When he came to a difficult point, he examined it carefully, and in a little while it would grow clear. "That's the spectacles!" he would say to himself, when he saw clearly how to proceed. But with all his care, the answer did not come out right. George had been so delighted with his unexpected success, and had begun

to feel so sure that he could do anything by the aid of his wonderful gift, that he felt much disappointed, and he began to fear that it was a dream, after all. But "persevere," was one part of the directions he remembered, and he commenced the sum again.

"That is right; that must be so. No mistake there. Let us see. Eyes bright, magical friends! I do believe I divided when I ought to have multiplied. I'm sure I did. You failed me that time, my little man. But I will give you another chance."

He corrected his mistake and went on. Every step looked clearer. He could see far enough ahead, to know that he would come somewhere near the answer, and he went on exultingly. Before he got through he was making figures with a perfect fury. His fingers were flying, and he wished he could make them fly twice as fast.

"There it is. Right, sir, exactly right. Not a fraction wrong," and he brought his fist down

upon his slate, so hard that he nearly broke it. "Thank you, my fairy. You're a beauty. Spec–ta–cles! spec–ta–cles!" and he prolonged the sound in imagination to the greatest length.

He was aroused from his exultation, by a call to the class to come to recitation. "Is it possible," he thought, "that it is time to recite? How fast the time has passed away!"

He saw that Tom Jones was looking at him with a quiet smile on his face, as though he was thinking, "I guess you have found out that your dream about the magical spectacles has not helped you much."

Some of the boys had worked out nearly all the sums; but no one of them, who had been asked, had been able to get the last one.

"Well, George, how is it with you?" asked the teacher, in a tone which indicated that he did not expect he had done all the sums. "How many did you get?"

'I did them all, Sir," he replied with promptness, and a glow upon his face that showed his excitement.

"Did you work out the last one?"

"Yes, Sir, I have just finished it. Here it is on my slate now."

"Perhaps you can do it on the blackboard, then," the teacher said, with some incredulity in his manner.

"Yes, Sir, I think I can," answered George.

The boys all looked suprised, but none of them more so than Tom Jones. George had been in the habit of going to Tom for assistance, and Tom had good-naturedly given him many a lift. He had been, as George told Clara, his fairy, to assist him in his difficulties. Tom was, therefore, much surprised to find that he had done a sum without his assistance which no other boy in the class, except himself, could do.

George took his place at the blackboard and

worked out the problem correctly, explaining every step clearly as he went along. There could be no doubt about it. He did understand it. Tom began to think that there *was* magic about it somewhere, and George was so elated that his eyes fairly shone.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW TEST.—DESPAIR.—SUCCESS.

As soon as they were out of the door, at recess, Tom ran up to George, and cried out, "Who showed you how to do that sum?"

"My fairy," said George, with great glee. "The magic spectacles helped me to see right through it. What do you think now? Was it a dream, or a reality? My fairy is the boy! The funny old gentleman! Spec–ta–cles," he cried out at the top of his voice.

"Oh fudge!" said Tom, "I know you got somebody to help you, or you never could have done that sum."

"And so I did," said George. "It was my fairy. It was the magic spectacles. And you must have a pair too, or you could not have done it, and you needn't deny it. You needn't be so sly about it, I have found you out at last. Now own up."

"I don't know anything about your fairies, and your magic spectacles. I get my sums by hard work, and I guess you will find that you will have to get yours in the same way. Your fairy will not amount to much after all. Let us see how you will get along in your geography. Wonder if your spectacles will help you to find the places on the map, and pronounce the hard names, and remember them too. I'll bet you will come to me before night and say: 'Oh Tom, do show me where that city is.' 'How do you pronounce that jaw-breaking name?'"

"Well, perhaps I shall," said George. "If I do, you will be my fairy, as you have been so often before. But honestly, now, I do believe there is something in it. I'm sure I never saw through any

sums so clearly before, not even when you showed me."

The bell rang before Tom had time to make any reply, and they went back into the school-house.

The next lesson to be learned was in geography, and it was a very hard one too. George always found the greatest difficulty in committing his lessons to memory. Indeed, he thought it was impossible for him to commit a long verse in his geography, or any other study, to memory. So fully convinced was he of this lack of power, that he always failed when his success depended upon it. He would sometimes try to learn a verse or a rule by heart; but he failed so often, when he came to recitation, that he had about given up trying. He would read over the task a few times in a careless way, while his thoughts were on something else, and trust to good luck to get through the recitation as he could.

As soon as he opened his book, the old feeling of the impossibility of learning his lesson came over

him. The subject was a general description of South America. It was a review. But he had never learned it, and he had never believed that it was possible for him to do it. He was frightened at the hard names, and the great length of the lesson. His first thought was to close his book and not attempt such an impossible task. But the spectacles, and his wonderful success in his arithmetic, came home to him with great force. "If I can learn that lesson," he thought, "I am sure that there must be some wonderful power in the spectacles." He was almost afraid to try, for fear that his hopes might prove to be all a delusion; and that he had succeeded in getting his sums more by some happy accident than by any new power from the spectacles. But he had learned one lesson which was so hard that no one of his companions, or his teacher, supposed it possible for him to get, and he might succeed again.

He looked over the long array of hard names, and the great amount that he must commit to memory, and

he felt that it was nearly impossible to succeed, without some unusual aid. With this feeling, he began and read the lesson all over two or three times, and then shut the book to see if he could remember any of it. But he could not repeat the first line, even. He tried the same process again, with no better success. The names of rivers and mountains were all jumbled up in his mind, and the words seemed to jump around and change at every turn of his thoughts, like the colors in a kaleidoscope.

"I knew I could not do it," he said to himself in a kind of despair, "and there is no use in trying. I must get something more powerful than my invisible spectacles, before I can remember such a lesson as that. I shall have to get a magical memory. Perhaps the spectacles are good for nothing to assist in remembering. They may only help one to see. If that is so, there is not much use in them after all."

Then he began to think over what the little man

had said to him, and what directions he had given him about the manner of using them.

"He told me I 'could not see everything at first.' That is very true. And that I 'must not be discouraged.' But I am discouraged. I have failed in that particular, certainly. I must have patience. I don't see why he could not have given me the patience, as well as the spectacles, or else have given me some spectacles that would not require any patience. 'One thing at a time,' that was first-rate advice in the arithmetic. I wonder if it would not do as well in geography. Perhaps the spectacles can see only one thing at a time. Perhaps they are like photographs. We have to hold still until there is time to make an impression, or else everything becomes confused. The lesson seems to me some like the photograph of Charles, Willie, and the baby. They kept bobbing around so that their heads and hands all ran into each other, and you cannot tell which is which. 'One thing at a time.'

Well, I will try that. Come, spectacles, brighten up and look as sharp as you can."

George read over the first sentence, in the first verse, and counted the words. There were just six in it. He looked carefully at every word, and thought what it meant. He could remember what others told him well enough, but he could not learn the words from a book. The thought suddenly occurred to him: "I will make South America speak, and then I can remember what she has to say for herself."

"Come, Madam. What have you to say for yourself? Speak up, but don't talk too fast. Oh, yes, I hear;" and he read over the first sentence again, and then shut his eyes, as if listening. "I can remember that, and I will inform my teacher. Now, what more?" He then read the next sentence, with great care and attention, and again shut his eyes as if listening. "I don't think I quite understand you. There is one word a little too long and

hard. Please to explain its meaning. 'Go to the dictionary,' shall I? Well, just as you say. But I think I have heard that advice before."

He looked up the meaning of the word, spelled it very carefully, and found the right pronunciation. Then he read over the sentence again, and, assuming his former character of listener, he shut his eyes, and said, "Please, Madam, make that statement again. Oh! thank you, I understand it now perfectly. Please to go on."

He read the next sentence in the same manner, looking sharply at every word, until he could see exactly how it looked, with his eyes closed. He then read over the whole verse, and carrying on his imaginary conversation, he said: "Will you be so kind as to repeat to me the message you wish me to deliver to my teacher; I am very anxious to get it correct." Then he repeated it to himself. "That's right, is it? You think I have an excellent memory?

Thank you for the compliment. Now I am ready to hear anything else you have to say."

In this way he went on to the next verse. He became interested in this imaginary conversation, and it seemed to grow more and more real. He looked at the words, as if some one was really speaking to him, and every faculty of his mind became awake and active. When he came to a hard word, he would examine every letter in it. He would ask it questions, such as, "What do you say?" "What's your name?" "Excuse me, will you please to speak it again."

As soon as he had learned the second verse, he put himself into a listening attitude, and repeated the two without looking at the book or making a mistake. Fifteen minutes before, he supposed such a feat was impossible. "You say that's right? and that I am getting along very well? You are pleased to have so attentive a listener? Thank you, I'll do the best I can to serve you. Have you anything

more to say? I have heard that you have some very remarkable mountains. I think my teacher would like to know something about them."

He then studied all that was said in the lesson about the mountains. He spelled the names carefully, and tried to fix in his memory their height and length, and every particular that was stated. He frequently made comments and asked imaginary questions as he went along. "You have very high mountains; plenty of back-bone. Gold and silver; I should not object, if you should send me a few millions. Diamonds, too! Well, you are rich! I'll take a handful, if you please. No? Haven't any to spare? Wouldn't do me any good? Well, perhaps not. But, I beg to differ with you on that point. You think I had better hear what you have to say about your rivers? Very well; I agree to that; my teacher is fond of water, and he will be delighted to hear that you have a plenty of it."

He now commenced studying the rivers. The

names were strange, and he found much difficulty in remembering them. But his mind was thoroughly aroused. He spelled them, compared them, and tried to form a picture of them in his own mind. "You have a plenty of water, but it's a very dry subject, after all. Couldn't you have found some prettier names? I think names must have been scarce when your rivers were christened. 'Good enough? You think them very sweet and easy to speak?' It may be so. But there are too many x's, y's and z's to suit me. Please to pronounce this jaw-breaker again! Thank you; I think I can do it now."

In this way he went through the whole lesson. He became so much interested that he forgot all about the school, and everything else but his lesson. He now repeated the whole that he had learned from the beginning, and found he could do it without making a mistake. Whether it was the spectacles or not, he did not know; but he was quite sure that he could see the words, and understand and

remember them, much better than he had ever been able to do before. It seemed so easy to repeat the hard words and long sentences, that he kept doing it for fun. He could rattle them off as fast as he could speak. He was astonished at himself. He had accomplished the impossible.

The time had passed away without notice. The hour for recitation had come, and he was prepared.

"Thank you, Madam," he said, carrying on the imaginary conversation; "it will give me great pleasure to tell my teacher all that you have said to me about yourself, and I think I can report it correctly. I shall be very happy to see you again. But for the present, I must bid you good-morning."

His teacher and class-mates were no less surprised than he was himself at the manner in which he recited his lesson. They had never known him to do it so well before. There was a glow on his face, a brightness in his eyes, and an interest in the recitation, that they had never before seen.

When the school was out for the day, he ran up to Tom, and cried out: "What do you think now, Tom, about the spectacles? All a dream, are they?"

"I think," said Tom, "that you have really begun to study. I watched you, and I never saw you study so before. You hardly looked off your book, and when you did, you seemed to be thinking about your lesson. I saw you smile a number of times, but it did not seem to be at anything in the school."

"Oh, no. I was talking with South America. A very interesting lady, I can tell you, though she has given her children some awful hard names."

"With South America! What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing! Only that with my magic spectacles I could see Mrs. South America, and I had a very pleasant time with her. It is all the spectacles, Tom; it is all the work of my fairy."

"All nonsense," said Tom, with a good-natured laugh.

"I see you don't believe it. But I know I couldn't

have learned that lesson in a month, if my fairy, or something else, had not helped me. I never could remember anything before. But to-day it seemed as if I could see right through the words. They looked so bright, I know some new light shone upon them. I tell you it isn't a dream. I am sure it isn't. But I shall know to-night, when Clara comes home; for if she has succeeded as well as I have, we shall know for certain that it is not a dream. But I must go home." And shouting "Spec-ta-cles, Spec-ta-cles," he ran on, happy with the results of the day, and with the hopes awakened by the evidence that he had really found some magical power to assist him in getting his lessons. His imagination began to be filled with bright visions of the future. He would become rich and learned and great, beyond any one who had ever lived. His life would be more wonderful than any of the stories in the Arabian Nights.

His mother noticed that he was in fine spirits, as

soon as he came into the house. "I think you must have had a very pleasant day in school, George," she said, "and have learned your lessons well, for good lessons make school happy."

"Yes, mother; I had every lesson perfectly, and we had some very hard ones, too. I did that long hard sum on the black-board, and there was not another boy in the class, but Tom Jones, who could do it."

"I suppose he helped you, did he not?" asked his mother, with a quiet smile, as though she knew where he generally found his assistance.

"No, mother, he did not help me a bit, neither did the teacher, nor any boy in school. But it is time for the ball-club to meet, and I must go, for if I don't get there in season, I shall be fined."

His mother excused him, and he went away with a light heart. It will be noticed that he did not positively deny having received any assistance. He was not ready to tell his mother about the magic

spectacles, for he was not yet quite sure what to make of them himself.

He had a very pleasant game of ball. He never played so well before. He made some fine runs, and one catch, which all the boys called splendid. He went home thinking it had been one of the pleasantest days of his life. He had not seen Clara yet, as she did not go to the same school, and she had not returned when he went to play ball. He longed to have tea over, that he might get a chance to talk with her, and find out whether she had been as successful as he had. But we will put her first experience with the magic spectacles into the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFERENCE.—THE MUSIC-LESSON.

GEORGE determined not to tell Clara anything about his experience with the magic spectacles, until he had found out whether she had discovered any improvement in her ability to see and understand her lessons since the night before. He would pretend at first that there was nothing in it, and that they must have been dreaming. If Clara insisted that she could see better than usual, without knowing his splendid success during the day, it would be the best kind of evidence of the reality of their wonderful gift. George went to the piazza first, a favorite resort for the children in warm summer evenings, and sat there musing on the events of the

day, and waiting with some impatience for his sister. Clara joined him as soon as possible, for she was as eager to tell her own story as he was to hear it.

"Oh, George!" she exclaimed, as she came running out. "I do believe there is something in it?"

"In what?" he replied, pretending not to know what she referred to.

"In the magic spectacles, that our fairy gave us last night; I know there is something in it. I never could see how to do things so well before in my life. They are such a help!"

"Oh, pshaw!" said George. "You are just making believe!"

"No, indeed, I am not. I know I can see better than I ever could before. Can't you?"

"Didn't I tell you last night that there were no such beings as fairies? And even if there were, do you suppose they could put spectacles on the inside of our eyes? How could they get them in?"

"It does seem strange. But you know fairies can

do anything. The stranger it is, the more fairy-like. There is nothing too hard for them to do."

"Do you really think you can see any better than you could yesterday?"

"Yes, I know I can."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I never could do before what I have done this afternoon."

"What have you done that is so remarkable? This is the day for your music lesson, isn't it?"

"Yes; you know how I hate it and never could understand it, and how cross Professor Gamutini, as you call him, is, and how I dread my lesson every time it comes?"

"Oh yes, I know all that very well. I've heard you grumble enough about it, to understand, without the aid of any magic spectacles, that you hate your music lesson. If you can see how to like it, and how to play well, I shall think there must be something in the spectacles."

"It is about as hard for me to learn music as it is for you to learn geography, isn't it?"

Clara felt a little vexed that George should agree with her so fully about her dislike to music, and she could not refrain from touching him a little in one of his own sore places in return. George's dislike to geography, and his inability to commit his lessons to memory, had often been the subject of discussion and sympathy between them.

George winced a little at Clara's thrust, but chuckled within, at the thought of his success in that line, during the afternoon. He still adhered to his purpose, however, to say nothing about his own experience until he had learned all about his sister's.

"Well!" he replied, "I suppose you can play everything perfectly, by the aid of your magic spectacles!"

"Oh come, George," she replied, "don't be so perverse and foolish! The fairy did not promise that they would help us to do everything right off. But

I see you don't believe there is anything in it, and don't want to know anything about it, and so I will not trouble you." So saying, she got up, as if to go back into the house.

George saw he was carrying his unbelief a little too far. "Don't go," he said, "I was only joking. Do tell me all about your lesson."

"Well, you may laugh as much as you please. But I know there is something in the magic spectacles."

"How did they help you? What did you do?" asked George.

"You know how I always get my music mixed up. The spaces hop over the lines, and the lines run into the spaces. The sharps get flat, and the flats become so sharp that I can't see them, and there is nothing natural and easy about it. Sometimes I mistake the key in the book for the keys of the piano. Then the Professor cries out, 'De key, de key, Mees! Why you not mind de key? Where is

de key?' I could see plenty of them in the piano, and when I looked down to find which one he wanted, he would exclaim, 'No, no, de key in de book, in de museek.' Then I would look in the book, and after looking all over my lesson without finding any key, he would come to my help. 'De key is in B,' or A, or some other letter. That puzzled me still more, for I could find no such letters in the book. Then I would strike the key, or I would use the wrong finger, and finally everything would get so jumbled up, that I could do nothing but pound away at random. Oh dear! how many times I have wished the piano at the bottom of the ocean, and the Professor with it."

"Well, could you do any better to-day?" asked George.

"Oh yes. I got along so nicely to-day, that Prof. Gamutini did not scold me once, and when I had finished my lesson he made me a very polite bow and said, 'Vary goot, Mees. You have done as better as never before.'"

"How did you do it?" inquired George, with much interest. "What helped you?"

"Why! the spectacles, of course."

"How did they do it? Can't you tell?"

"No, I don't believe I can. I could see the notes and keys better; they did not get all mixed up; and my fingers seemed to know how to strike the right ones."

"Your spectacles must have been in your fingers, then. I guess they worked down through your arms into the ends of your fingers. Didn't you practise your lesson any in the morning?"

"Yes, indeed I did; I practised it much longer than usual. But I shouldn't have done it if it had not been for the spectacles!"

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed George; "how could they help you to practise?"

"Well, I don't know, but somehow the lesson seemed different; it was real fun to practise this morning, and I generally hate it. I did not look at

the clock once, and mother says I generally jump up every five minutes. It seemed so pleasant this morning, that I practised ten minutes longer than my time, and I didn't know it until mother called me."

"What made it pleasant?"

"The spectacles, I tell you. You won't believe me."

"I don't see how the spectacles could make a lesson pleasant," said George.

"Neither do I," said Clara. "But they did, because they are the gift of a fairy, and have some magic in them."

"They must have some wonderful power, if they could make you like music. But I think you could tell me something more about your lesson if you would try."

"Well, let me see. When I sat down to the piano, I thought I would do the best I could to find out whether I had any magic spectacles or not. So I tried to remember what the little man said to us;

for you know, if you don't do just exactly as the fairies tell you, their gifts won't have any charm.

"Well, you know he said, 'Remember, and do one thing at a time.' But there are so many things in music that it is almost impossible. First I thought I would learn on what lines and spaces the letters were, for I have never been quite sure about it, and when I begin to play I always make mistakes. I went over them a good many times. But still they were much confused, and I was beginning to get a little discouraged, when I thought I would try a new way of learning."

"What was that?" asked George.

"I thought I would ask the lines and spaces what their number was, just as we ask each other when we are playing games."

George was much delighted at this, for it reminded him of the plan he devised to learn his geography.

"So," continued Clara, "I asked the bottom line, 'Where do you stand?' And he answered, 'I stand first.'

"'Who are your neighbors?'

"'Miss First Space lives just above me, and her sister lives just below me on the other side.'

"'Who are you, sir?' I said to the next line above.

"'I am Mr. Second Line. I am stationed between Miss First and Miss Second Space, and it is as much as I can do to keep them apart.'

"So I went through with all the lines and spaces, talking to them, and asking them questions, and I became so much interested in the conversation that sometimes it seemed as though they almost answered them themselves. In a little while I could see the staff just as plainly with my eyes shut as with them open, and knew all about the lines and spaces."

"That was a capital idea," said George. "If we could make our books talk to us, it would be easy

enough to learn them. But how did you get along with the letters? I should think it would be the hardest to remember their places on the staff."

"So it is," said Clara. "But I made them tell me where they lived. First I asked Mr. A.

"'Well, Mr. A, how do you do?'

"'Pretty well, I thank you. Can I do anything for you to-day?'

"'Please to tell me where you live, I want to call upon you.'

"'I live in Second Space. Mr. B lives just above me, and Mr. G just below. You can easily find the place.' So I went through with them all, and I really had a very nice chat with them. I asked them all sorts of questions, and answered them myself. It was real fun."

"But that did not help you much about playing the notes," said George.

"I thought of a very funny way to connect the notes on the staff with the keys of the piano.

"The first note was C. So I said, 'Mr. C, will you be so kind as to tell me where you live?'

"'Yes, with much pleasure. I always reside in Third Space, between Mr. B and Mr. D. I should be very happy to receive a call from you.'

"'How shall I get in?'

"'You must ring the bell, by striking the key of the same name.'

"So I rang the bell for one letter, and then another, pretending to call, until the key and the letter, and its place, became quite familiar. I was so much interested in my imaginary conversation, that the time passed away without my knowing it, and many things seemed so much clearer than they ever did before, that I am sure the spectacles must have helped me.

"I went over my whole lesson in that way, thinking of one thing at a time, and looking at it very sharply until I could see it. Then I could play the notes much faster, and better, because I did not

have to think of so many things at once. Prof. Gamutini was highly delighted. I should not be surprised if I became a great favorite with him, and music became a great favorite with me."

"And you think the spectacles helped you to all this, do you?" said George.

"Yes, I know they did. I never should have thought of such a way of learning, in my life, if it had not been for them. I am sure I shall learn very fast now. It was no dream, I know it wasn't."

"Now tell me about your eyes," continued Clara. "Can't you see how to get your lessons any better than you could before? How did you get along with those hard sums in your arithmetic?"

"First-rate. Yes, I know there is something in the spectacles too. I never before learned such good lessons in my life, and they were real hard too."

"Did you? Oh, good! Then it must be so. The old man must have been a real fairy, and a very good one too. How kind and pleasant he looked!

But do tell me all about your lessons. Could you learn your geography?"

"Yes. It was just as easy as anything could be when I went to work in the right way. And what seems so queer, I contrived very much the same way to remember it, that you did to remember your music. I made Mrs. South America talk. I pretended she was telling me all about her rivers and mountains, and wanted me to tell the teacher. It must have been the wonderful spectacles that helped us to think of such a nice way. I learned my lessons as well as Tom Jones, and better than any other boy, besides him, in the class."

"Isn't it splendid? What did Tom say?"

"Oh, he laughed at me at first, when I told him that a fairy had given us some magical spectacles; or that we had dreamed it. For you know we were not quite sure which it was, in the morning. But when he found how well I had learned all my lessons, he didn't know what to make of it. I told

him it was all owing to the spectacles. But he said it was because I studied so much better than usual."

"What difference does that make?" asked Clara. "If they help us to study, and show us how to get our lessons, it is all the same."

"They help us to see, don't they?"

"Yes, indeed they do, and they will help us about a great many other things; because fairies can do almost everything."

"Do you suppose they will show us how to get rich?"

"Yes, I am sure they will. Why shouldn't they help us to see how to make money as well as to do anything else?"

The experience of both the children confirmed them in the idea of the reality and preciousness of their gift, and they gave loose reins to their imaginations, in picturing the glorious results of so valuable a possession. Nothing was too good or too great for them to attain.

"Shall we tell mother?" asked Clara.

"No, not yet," said George. "Let us wait until we are sure that there can be no mistake about it. Then we will surprise her by the great things we can do."

"But you don't think there is any doubt about our having such spectacles, do you?" asked Clara, who could not bear the thought that there was any possibility of mistake about it.

"No," George replied, "I don't think there is. But it is best to be sure, for if we should pretend we had such a gift, when we didn't have it, and shouldn't be able to see any better how to get our lessons or do anything than we did before, the boys and girls would tease us to death. I wish I hadn't said anything to Tom Jones. But he pretended not to believe a word about it; so it won't make much difference."

"Let us try to-morrow," said Clara, "and do the best we can. If we don't try and do just as the

spectacle-man told us, he may be vexed and take them away from us, and then it will be worse than if he had never given them to us."

"I am going to do it," said George; "I'll get ahead of Tom Jones yet. Wouldn't that be fun? But if he has a pair too, I can't do it, of course."

So the children talked on, telling what great things they would do; how learned and great they would become, and what splendid things they would have, until it was time to go in and go to bed.

They were both so much elated with the idea of possessing some magical power, that they could not get to sleep for a long time; and then the old man with his little box, and wonderful visions of the knowledge and power they would obtain, filled their minds. They woke, however, bright and early in the morning, each one determined to do the best possible to prove the possession of such a wonderful gift.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW PROOF.—SEWING.—IT IS A FACT.

THE next morning, as George was swinging his satchel of books upon his shoulder to go to school, Clara ran up to him and whispered in his ear—

"Now, mind, and do the best you can, and to-night we will see if we are not sure of the magic spectacles."

"Don't you be afraid," said George; "I guess there is more danger that you will fail than that I shall."

So saying, he hurried away, half shouting to himself, "Spec-ta-cles! Spec-ta-cles! Buy my spec-ta-cles! I'm the boy for spectacles."

George and Clara both felt an interest in their

studies which they had never dreamed possible before; not because they cared so much about learning, but they desired to test, beyond all possibility of doubt, the reality of possessing some magical power, and there was still uncertainty enough about it to give the experiment an intense interest.

As George was going along to school, thinking over the experience of the day before and almost dreading the test of another trial, Tom Jones overtook him.

"Well, Spectacles," said he, addressing George, "how do you come on?"

"First-rate," said George, "if by 'Spectacles' you mean me."

"Who showed you how to do that sum yesterday?"

"Nobody, I did it myself."

"I thought you had some magic spectacles, or some such nonsense, which helped you to see how to do things."

"Did you see any on my nose?" asked George. "If you did, perhaps you know whether I had any or not."

"Didn't you say some old magician gave you a pair, and had given me a pair before?"

George thought this was a good time to leave Tom in the dark about the matter. So he replied:

"Didn't you say it was all nonsense? Which will you believe, me or yourself?"

"I shall believe myself, of course, until I see the wonderful glasses on your nose, and you peering through them, like old Mr. Scribble."

Mr. Scribble was their writing teacher, and he was so near-sighted that he wore glasses, and then stuck his nose down almost to the paper.

"You may believe it or not, just as you please," said George. "Perhaps I was only joking yesterday."

"That was what I thought at first," said Tom; "but you seemed so much in earnest about it, that I

was sure somebody had been humbugging or mesmerizing you, or something of that sort. If you get your lessons as well to-day as you did yesterday, it will be a magical change in you, certainly."

By this time the boys had reached the schoolhouse, and the bell was just ringing for the school to commence. They took their places; the roll was called, and the work of the day began.

As George took his books from his satchel his hands trembled, and his heart sunk within him for a moment at the thought that he might be disappointed, after all. But he soon roused up his courage and determined to do his best. He recalled the directions for the use of the spectacles. "One thing at a time." "Look sharp," and "Persevere."

"Well," he thought, "they helped me splendidly yesterday, and I will try them again to day."

He took his slate, opened his arithmetic, and read over the lesson. To his amazement he found it consisted of miscellaneous examples, and he was

quite sure he should fail unless he had some help from his spectacles or something else. He read over the first example. It was not a very hard one, and he worked it out quite easily. This encouraged him, and he went to work at the next with more confidence. This was more difficult, and at the first reading he did not see how to do it.

"Stop," he said to himself, "I am going too fast, I am not obeying the rule, 'One thing at a time.' There's the first step; that is easy enough. Now I see the second," and he began to make the figures more rapidly. "So far, so good. Now I have come against a stump. Don't get confused and blur the spectacles. Let me see. Ah, that's it. No, it is not. Yes, it is. That is right, as sure as my name isn't Tom Jones."

So he went on from one to another, becoming more and more excited and confident by his success. He really seemed to have new light, and a new power of looking through his sums and understand-

ing them. And his success gave him so much pleasure, that he worked on for very delight. He had now obtained answers to all the sums but the last, which, as usual, was much the hardest, and taxed all his powers, and those of the spectacles also. He tried it several times without success. But it yielded at last to his wonderful power, and the answer came out right. He had been so absorbed in his study that he forgot where he was, and he came very near crying out at the top of his voice, "Spec-ta-cles!" The hissing sound of the *s* was just beginning to flow from his lips, when he recollected himself in time to prevent the tumult which such an explosion would have made. With a half-frightened and triumphant look he closed his arithmetic, took a long breath, and commenced another lesson.

He went through the day as successfully as he had done the day before. All his lessons were well learned and well recited. His teacher and class-

mates were all much surprised, for he had never done so well before.

George was not a bad boy. But he was very playful, impatient, and easily discouraged. For these reasons he rarely had perfect lessons, unless they were very easy, or some one helped him. He had failed so often, that he had come to think it was impossible for him to do anything that was very difficult, and he would not try. But the idea of the spectacles put new courage into his heart and gave him a new power. He left the school-house in high glee, delighted with his continued success, and the evidence it gave him of possessing some marvellous power.

Clara was not less successful, though in a very different way. She had nothing in the nature of study, except to practise her music lesson an hour. After the experience of the day before, she did not go to it with the same dread and dislike as formerly. On the contrary, she rather longed to have the hour

of practice come, that she might call upon her friends, the notes, who lived in the various lines and spaces, and give her new method of learning another trial. She found she could remember her lesson much better than ever before. Her careful attention to the lines and spaces, and the names of the notes on them; the comparison of one with another, and the living interest excited by making them talk to her, had so fixed them in her memory that she found no difficulty in recalling them. The hour passed pleasantly away, and she was surprised when her mother called her to find the time had been so short.

Now she was to put the reality of her possession of a magical power to another and severer test.

Clara was a quick, nervous, and restless girl, and all kinds of confinement and patient attention to little things were very irksome to her. Sewing was her especial dislike. She had not the patience to take stitch after stitch, to make them even, and

keep her work straight. Her mother, however, thought it necessary for her to learn to sew, and a part of two days in the week was spent in doing it.

"Now," she thought, "if I can see how to do my sewing well, and can learn to like it, I shall know for certain that I have some new and magical power." She took up her work with more interest than usual, though it was more difficult and trying than she had ever attempted before.

Her mother prepared her work for her; told her how to do it, and cautioned her to be patient and do it as nicely as she could.

"Now I shall need my spectacles," she said to herself, "and I must remember how to use them. 'One thing at a time.' That is certainly good advice in sewing. 'Look sharp.' That I must do or I shall get the stitches long and short, and crooked, and every way. It is easy enough to take one stitch; but I am sure her next neighbor will be too near or too far off, or too much on one side."

She threaded her needle, and took the first stitch, but the thread came clear through. She had forgotten to tie a knot in the end of it.

"There's a mistake, to begin with," she said, and a feeling of impatience began to rise in her mind.

"There are so many things to think of and do that I shall never remember them all. 'One thing at a time.' Well, I will try again. It is not so easy to take the first stitch as I thought it was. There; I have certainly got a knot in the end of my thread now;" and she tried again, and failed again. The knot was not well tied, and it pulled out.

"Oh, dear," she said to herself, "I shall not even make a beginning to-day. But, 'patience.' 'Don't get excited.' Ah, dear old man, why didn't you give me spectacles that had patience in them, and then I should never get excited. But I will try once more."

She now tied the knot very carefully, and it held. "There is one stitch, and I might just as well have

taken it right the first time, if I had only thought. Well, better luck next time. Now for the next. Don't get too near your neighbor; she is number one, and she don't like to have people too familiar with her. And don't get too far off; if you do she will think you intend to slight her, and that will hurt her feelings. That will do. It is just about right. Now I will try again."

The third stitch was too far off. "Oh, you mustn't run away. Don't be afraid of your neighbors, they won't hurt you."

The fourth was taken with more care, and was just right. So she went on for some time. The stitches were even, and the seam was quite straight.

Clara examined carefully all that she had done, and then said:

"The spectacles do help; I can see better, I am sure; I never sewed so well as that before."

As she was examining her work, and thinking

about her success, her mother entered the room, and coming up to Clara, said pleasantly:

"How are you getting along to-day?"

"Pretty well, I think, mamma," she replied, and held out her work for her mother to examine.

"Yes," she said, handing it back to her, "you are sewing very neatly; I hope you will do it all as well."

"How much must I do to-day, mamma? Haven't I done nearly enough?"

"No, you must sew up those three seams."

"Oh, mamma, I can never do that, I am sure; see how long they are!" and she held up her work with a look of despair.

"Well, you must try, and if you do, you can finish them easily enough."

Clara knew she would have to do it, and she might as well begin. But it seemed to be an almost impossible task. She thought she would see how many stitches it would take. So she counted the number in the length of her longest finger, and then

measured the length of the seams by it. She found it would take just two hundred and fifty.

"I am sure I cannot do that in the whole day. Two hundred and fifty! and I have taken only twenty-five in all this time. There is no use in trying to do so much. Why didn't the fairy give me some power, so that I could just say, 'Be sewed!' and it would all be beautifully done in a moment? The spectacles are not much, after all! Fairies ought to do everything for us!"

"That would do you no good," came into her mind so quick and clear, that she looked round, thinking the old man must have spoken it. "'One thing at a time.' 'Don't be discouraged.' He did say that," she thought. "But there is no magic in 'One thing at a time!' 'One thing at a time!' But I must do it, magic or no magic."

So saying, she commenced sewing, at the same time carrying on a running conversation with the stitches and the spectacles.

"Now, Spectacles, do help me."

They seemed to say, "Don't get excited and blur us. If you do we can't see. One stitch at a time. Be patient, and look sharp."

"Well, I'll try. There's one made, and one less to take."

"'Yes, and I am a very good stitch too.'

"'So you are,' said the spectacles. 'Now try again, Miss.'

"Oh, I can take one or two easy enough, but think of two hundred and fifty."

"You have not two hundred and fifty to take. Only two hundred and forty-nine."

"That is so, and I will make the number much less than that soon."

She now went to work in earnest. "Forty-eight." "Forty." "Thirty." "Twenty-five." The spectacles said: "Bravo! You are getting along nicely. Not too fast. Take care. There will soon be only two hundred. 'One at a time,' has magic in it."

"I do believe it has," said Clara, almost aloud. "Are you talking to me, Spectacles?"—"Yes, we are. And if you don't get impatient, and excited so we can't see, we will show you how to finish your work in a short time."

"Well, I will try. You shall have a fair chance."

By ceasing to think of the difficulty and the amount of her work, she could direct her whole attention to what she was doing. Her fingers became more nimble, and she could direct the needle with more care. The stitches grew in number, and became more regular. She was soon upon the last hundred, and the distance to the end rapidly diminished.

"There is magic in 'patience' and, 'one thing at a time,'" she said.

"I told you so," said the spectacles. "And everything I say will always prove true."

"Then you will be the best kind of a fairy gift."

"Fifty, Twenty-five. Almost there, am I? Yes indeed, a few more. There you are. It

is done. There is magic in patience, and perseverance and the spectacles!"

She took her work and was carrying it to her mother, who was in another room, busy about her own duties.

"Well, what is the matter now, my child?" Clara had come so soon, she had no idea her work was finished. Her mother supposed she wanted to beg off from doing it, or to make some complaint.

"Nothing is the matter, mamma," said Clara, very pleasantly, "except I have done all you told me to do."

"What, so soon!" said her mother, with surprise. "Then I am afraid you have slighted it, and you know I told you I wanted to have it done very nicely."

So saying, she took the work out of Clara's hand and examined it.

"Why, no, you haven't slighted it; it is done very well indeed, better than I ever knew you to sew

before. You must have had some fairy to help you, I think."

"Yes, mamma, I did."

"Two, perhaps," said her mother, smiling. "Were not their names Patience and Diligence? You will find them very serviceable fairies, always."

Clara was on the point of telling her mother about the spectacles. But at that moment George came, rushing in with his face glowing with happiness.

"Well, my boy," said his mother, "how did you get along at school to-day?"

"Oh! first-rate."

"Did you get all those hard sums?" asked Clara.

"Yes, every one of them; and I had a very pleasant visit with Africa, and brought a long message from her across the Atlantic Ocean to my teacher. But it is my turn to ask questions now. How is the sewing?"

"Oh, first-rate," said Clara, imitating George's tone. "It is all done."

"Did you prick your fingers?"

"No."

"Did you get your thread all snarled up, and break it?"

"Only once."

"Did you get vexed fifty times, and declare you never could finish your task?"

"No, not fifty. And I did get through, and did my sewing very nicely. Didn't I, mamma?"

"Yes, you have done very well; I never knew you to sew so much and so well in the same time before."

"Then, some fairy must have helped her," said George, giving Clara a knowing look.

"So mamma just told me.

"I had two."

"Two?"

"Yes."

"Well, you ought to have done your work in double quick time," said George. "Who were they?"

"Oh, those old-fashioned fairies, called Patience and Diligence," said Clara, laughing.

"I didn't know but they might have given you some magic spectacles, or something of that kind, to help you see," said George, with a quick glance at his mother and Clara.

"I have got a pair of magic spectacles—"

George was just raising his hand, and a "Hush" was on his lips, when Clara added: "In my two eyes."

George and Clara both laughed at the double meaning, and looked wisely at each other.

"So have I," said George, "a pair of magic spectacles in my two eyes."

"Did they help you to do your sums?" his mother inquired, with a pleasant smile, "or was it Tom Jones?"

"Oh, it was the spectacles, mother; Tom did not help me with one of them."

As soon as George and Clara could get by them-

selves, they talked over the history of the day, and both concluded that there could no longer be any doubt about the possession of the spectacles.

"I can do five times as much as I could before," said George.

"So can I," said Clara. "And it is so much pleasanter. I was a little discouraged for a while about the sewing. But I began to think of the spectacles, and they seemed to talk to me, and tell me what to do, and then I got on nicely."

"Didn't it come in beautifully about the spectacles being in your two eyes? I was awful afraid you were going to tell."

"I am so glad," said Clara. "Because now we can talk as much as we please about our magical gift before father and mother, and they will think we mean our eyes. And it is true, you know, that they are in our eyes."

The tea-bell now rang, and they went in, with smiling faces and happy hearts. They were so sure

of the spectacles that they began to think there was nothing in the world which they might not be able to do.

CHAPTER VI.

WONDERFUL CHANGE.—THE CAUSE.—THE GIFT CERTAIN.

By these various tests, George and Clara became so certain that they were in the possession of some magical power, by the aid of which they could do almost anything they desired to do, that they were not afraid of any task their parents or teachers gave them. They even took delight in learning hard lessons, and in doing things which had always been unpleasant to them before. It is true they were sometimes discouraged, when they had a very difficult and unpleasant duty to perform, and were foolish enough to wish that the fairy had given them the power of obtaining everything they desired by merely wishing for it. But their discouragements

would soon pass away. They would recall to mind what he had told them. "One thing at a time" was almost as magical in its effects as the spectacles themselves. "Look sharp" always helped them. When they did not succeed the first time, and began to get excited, they thought of the consequences. They always found the spectacles growing dim, and this led them to make an effort to collect their thoughts and quiet their fears. The effect of this effort was always magical. The spectacles grew bright and everything appeared in clearer light.

In this way the children went on for some months, rejoicing in the possession of a secret and magical power, which enabled them to do what had seemed impossible before. Mr. and Mrs. Field could not but notice the remarkable change which had taken place in George and Clara, and it gave them the greatest pleasure, though they were at a loss to account for it. George had been so easily discouraged in his studies when he found any lesson that

was in the least difficult, and Clara was so impatient and took such dislike to some things which her mother desired to have her learn, that they were afraid their children would never accomplish much in anything.

George seemed like a different boy. He did not complain any more about his teachers, and hard lessons. They did not have to drive him to his books. On the contrary, he was always ready to talk about his school, and his studies. He was not afraid of long and difficult problems. The carelessness, and indifference, for which he was noted, passed away, and he was awake and observant of everything around him.

Quite as great a change had taken place in Clara. She was unusually attentive to her lessons. Sometimes her mother observed the old spirit of opposition to certain duties, rising in her mind from habit, but it pleased her to notice that her daughter always made an effort to put it down, and compel

herself to do what was required of her. After school the children would slip away into some corner, and talk over the events of the day in a pleasant manner. They seemed to take a much greater interest than usual in each other's studies, and in everything useful.

One evening, many months after the gift of the wonderful spectacles, as they were chatting away in a corner of the parlor, describing to each other some new instances of their power, Mr. Field thought it would be a good time to see if he could not learn something about the cause of the great change which had taken place in the children; so, turning to them, he said: "What are you talking about so earnestly, George? You and Clara must be forming some conspiracy, you have so many secrets to talk about."

"We were only talking about our lessons."

"Telling how you dislike them, I suppose," said his father, "and wishing there were no geographies, arithmetics, or schools."

"Oh, no, sir, we were not. I was telling Clara what a hard lesson we had in arithmetic to-day, and how easily I performed it."

"That is very strange; I thought you hated arithmetic."

"So I did once, but I like it now, very much; and I like my school and all my studies. They don't seem so hard as they did."

"How is that?" asked his father, "are they any easier than they were a year ago?"

"No, sir. They are much harder, but they seem easier to me."

"They are harder and yet they seem easier! How can that be? Tom Jones must help you, I think."

"No, sir, I help him sometimes."

"You help him! I thought he was the smartest boy in arithmetic in the class."

"So he was. But there was one sum in the lesson to-day that he could not do, and I showed him how."

"And did you not have any help?"

This was a hard question for George to answer. He was too truthful a boy to tell a lie, but he did not want to tell his father about the spectacles, for fear he would disbelieve him, or laugh at him. Besides, it was pleasant to have such a grand secret, and he intended some time to astonish his father and mother with his wonderful power. He recollected how happily the secret was concealed once before by really telling it, and he thought he would try it again. So he answered:

"Yes, sir, I have some help, but not from the teacher nor from any of the boys."

"Where, then, do you get it?"

"I have some magic spectacles, which help me to see how to do my sums, and get my lessons, and do many other things."

"Magic spectacles!" said his father. "What do you mean? Where are they?"

"They are in my eyes," George replied, with a smile, at the same time casting a knowing look at Clara.

"Oh, in your eyes, are they? Well, that is a very good place to have them," said his father.

"I should think Clara had a pair, too," said her mother, with a pleasant smile, "for she can see a great many things which she could not a few months ago. She can even see some use in sewing, and she is learning to do it very nicely, too. I am sure it must have required some magical power to make her able to do that."

"So I have, mamma," said Clara.

"And are yours in your eyes, too?" asked her father, with a quizzical smile.

"Yes, sir."

"And very bright and blue ones they are," he replied. "I hope you will never lose them."

"I hope not, too, I am sure."

"Your spectacles or your eyes?" asked George.

"Both," said Clara.

"Well, they must be very good spectacles indeed, if they help you to learn your lessons and do your duty."

A gentleman and lady now called, and the conversation was interrupted, much to the delight of the children, who were afraid that some question would be put to them which would compel them to tell the whole truth.

It all passed off very happily, as a good joke, which they all understood. The subject itself, however, was not forgotten, and the "magic spectacles" became quite a by-word in the family. When Mr. Field wanted anything done quickly, he would say: "Come, children, put on your spectacles and look sharp."

One day George made a great blunder in doing an errand for his father, and when the mistake was known, his father said, jocosely: "You must have lost your spectacles, George!"

So the time passed on, and the children continued to improve in their studies. George soon gained the reputation of being the best scholar in the school, and he deserved the name.

But there were many things which neither he nor Clara could see, even with the aid of their magic spectacles—things which put the power of their wonderful gift to a much severer test than their hardest lessons. This, however, is a matter of sufficient importance to put into another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOST CAP, AND THE LOST TEMPER.—A NEW TEST AND A NEW TRIUMPH OF THE SPECTACLES.

"WHERE'S my cap?" cried George one morning, as he stood in the hall, and was about to set out for school. "Has any one seen my cap?"

"I have not," said Clara, who was just coming out of the dining-room. "Perhaps you left it at school yesterday; perhaps it is in your bed."

"You know better than that," he replied, in an impatient tone. "You must have left your wits in bed or somewhere else."

"Along with my brother's good temper," she replied. "But I can tell you where your cap is."

"Where?"

"Where you left it." With this provoking remark she ran up stairs, and looked over the banisters to see its effect upon her brother.

"You provoking thing," he cried. "I'll pay you for that." Then he called, in a loud and still more impatient tone:

"Mother, have you seen my cap?"

"No, I have not, but I can tell you where it ought to be."

"It ought to be on my head, I suppose."

"No, it ought to be on the hat-rack, where it belongs."

"Well, it isn't there now," said George, in a somewhat subdued tone, for he knew his mother had often told him to hang up his cap in its proper place, when he came into the house.

"Why don't you look around and see if you can't find it?" asked his mother.

"I have looked everywhere. Somebody must

have hid it; I shouldn't wonder if it was some of Clara's mischief."

"No, it isn't," said Clara, who was still standing at the top of the stairs, and, I am sorry to say, rather enjoying his perplexity: "it is just where I told you it was. It is where you left it."

"It is no such thing. I left it upon the hat-rack, I am sure I did."

"That can hardly be," said his mother; "or you would find it there now. Have you asked Jane? Perhaps she can tell you."

"Where is she? I shall have to find her before I can ask her; and she is almost as hard to find as my cap."

Jane, fortunately, came along about this time, and declared that she knew nothing about it. "Perhaps it was on the back porch, where he was reading last night after he came home from school."

George remembered the reading, and he rushed out upon the porch, for it was getting late and he

had no time to spare. Sure enough, there was his cap on the floor, in the corner where he had thrown it the night before. He recollected now, that, instead of putting his cap in its place when he came in, he had thrown it down and forgotten all about it.

His mother was standing in the hall when he came back, and said to him, pleasantly: "I should think a boy who had magic spectacles could find his cap without making such an ado about it; I am afraid you have lost them."

"Oh, I hope not," said George, with so much earnestness as to surprise his mother.

"Well, if you will put your things where they belong, when you have done using them, you will not need any spectacles to find them; and it will have a magical effect upon the comfort of the whole family. But you must hurry off to school now, or you will be late. I wish, however, you would try to discover some of your faults with your wonder-

ful spectacles, and correct them. It would save yourself and all the rest of us much trouble."

George had no time to make any excuse or reply. He hastened to school as fast as he could. His mother's words, however, had their effect. Her playful allusion to the spectacles set him to thinking, and, as we shall see in the end, to some purpose.

George was very careless about some things. He hardly ever put anything in its place when he had done using it. He dropped his slate and books, and cap, or anything else, wherever he might happen to be; consequently he never knew where to find anything. His father and mother had often tried to correct the fault, but with very little success. He was so impulsive in his nature, that he went from one thing to another as the spirit moved him, and he was, generally, so absorbed in the present, that he forgot all about the past. This is a very common and serious fault in many children, and it needs some magical power to correct it.

George had never thought of using his spectacles for any other purpose than to see how to do his sums and get his other lessons. Here was a new way of testing their power. His mother's words kept ringing in his ears: "See my faults! I expect I have a plenty of them. But I have never thought much about them. I wonder if the spectacles would help me. It would be worth trying, and I will try it. Let me see. One fault is, I don't put up my things when I have done using them. I have been told that, I think, more than once. I don't need any spectacles to see that, but I am afraid I shall need more than one pair to make me see it at the right time. Well, 'One thing at a time,' that is the rule, and I will begin with 'Put up your things.'"

His mind kept running upon this subject until he reached the school-house. He was just in time, without a minute to spare; the duties of the school commenced, and he became absorbed in them.

Many times during the day, however, the thought

would come into his mind: "Faults! see my faults! they are not very pleasant things to see; will the spectacles help me to do that? Why not? I had plenty of faults about studying; I am sure they have helped me to correct some of them. Why not others? 'Look sharp,' 'One thing at a time.' Well, I'll try it, even if it will be rather unpleasant business."

The day passed pleasantly away as usual. George had learned the secret of being happy at school. The spectacles had worked a truly magical change in him in this respect. While he devoted himself entirely to his studies, and became absorbed in them, the time passed away without notice; his lessons were well learned; and success is always pleasant, and makes us happy.

The boys were going to have a game of ball after school, and he hurried home to leave his books, and get his bat. Wholly absorbed in thinking about the game, he threw his books and slate into a chair

that was standing in the hall, and was hurrying to a closet to get his bat, when something said to him: "Stop!" almost as plainly as if the words had been spoken with a human voice—"Stop, and put your books on the shelf where they belong!"

"I can't now, I am in a hurry. I'll put them up when I come back," he answered to himself.

"Stop," said the voice again. "Do it now."

"Is that you, my fairy, who says 'Stop' so plainly? I do believe it is. You can talk as well as see, can you? 'Put everything in its place.' I think I have heard that before, and I'll put one thing in its place now."

These thoughts flashed through his mind in a moment, while he was going back to the chair on which he had thrown his books. He took them up and placed them upon the shelf where they belonged. "There you are. All right this time. Thank you, my fairy. You have shown me one fault and I have corrected it once. 'One thing at a time.'"

He then hurried to the closet for his bat, but it was not to be found. His first impulse was to call Jane or his mother, for the bat. But he checked himself. He could not see the bat, but he saw his fault.

"There it is again," he thought. "Isn't it too bad?"

"Yes, it is too bad, and it is time to do better."

"Talking again, are you, Spectacles? Please to tell me where my bat is!"

"Can't see the bat. Can only see where it would be if—"

"Oh, yes, I can see that I didn't put it up. But I will next time."

"Jane, have you seen my bat?" Jane had heard him fumbling around, and she opened the door to see who it was.

"Yes. It is behind the door. You left it in the hall and I put it there. If you would put up your things you would know where to find 'em."

"Yes. I think I have heard that remark before,"

he said, as he seized the bat and rushed out of the door.

He was a little late in getting on the grounds, but he soon became interested in the play, and thought of nothing but how to win the game. When that was over it was time for supper, and he went home with his mind full of "grand hits," and "splendid catches," and "big runs." The moment he closed the hall-door, his cap went into the corner, and he was just on the point of dropping his club—when "Stop" rang through his ears.

"Oh, yes, I will stop. There's the fault again. You belong up there, I believe, Mr. Cap. 'Everything in its place.' And you, my faithful bat, are not to be trusted, honest as you are, with the freedom of the hall; I must put you into the closet and shut the door to prevent you from running away. There you are. Books on the shelf, bat in the closet, and cap on the rack. Now I trust *I* shall

not be on the rack to-morrow morning, when I want to find you."

"George, why don't you come to supper?" asked his mother.

"I am coming. I was putting up my things."

"Putting up your things! Well, if you have done that, you shall be excused for being a little late, and have an extra piece of cake in the bargain. What made you think of putting up your things?"

"The magic spectacles, mother."

"Well, they are magical indeed, if they can make you think to put your cap and books in their places. Some fairy must have given them to you."

"So he did," said George, with a knowing glance at Clara.

"*He* did!" said his father; "I thought fairies were always of the feminine gender."

"Mine are not," said George.

"Well, I don't care whether they are he or she,

if they can make you see your faults, and mend them."

"Did your fairy tell you where to find your cap this morning?" said Clara, with a quizzing tone and look.

"Yes," George replied, "she did, but I couldn't find it, even then. The fairy that told me where to find my cap is a very mischievous and provoking one, and she will get her pay for her help this morning.

Every one seemed to understand who George meant now, and there was a little sharpness in his tone, which showed that he did not feel very thankful for her services in the morning.

The supper ended, and they withdrew from the table. It had been an important day for George. For the first time he had seen the necessity of looking at his own faults in conduct as faults, and of making a voluntary effort to correct them. The idea was thoroughly lodged in his mind, and it was

the beginning of a most important change in his character. It was one step in advance towards becoming a wise and useful man. We cannot correct our faults until we see them as faults, and see them in ourselves as injurious and hateful; as something that requires effort and perseverance to remove. Children as well as grown people are generally sharp-sighted enough to see faults in others, but it requires a very different power to see them in themselves, and at the same time to go bravely to work to remove them. George never would have done it if it had not been for the magical spectacles.

CHAPTER. VIII.

A SHARP CONFLICT.—WHAT CAME OF IT.

George and Clara were much alike in many respects, as brothers and sisters generally are. Both had many faults, but their faults were not the same. Clara was not so careless about throwing down her things wherever she might happen to use them last. Indeed she rather prided herself upon her orderly habits. But she had other defects which were much worse than carelessness, and she needed the aid of her spectacles to see them quite as much as her brother did. She was very fond of teasing George and her companions, and making fun of them; and she would sometimes let a sharp word fly that would wound and sting like a poisoned arrow.

She delighted also in playing practical jokes, and always thought it a sufficient excuse for any pain she might inflict upon others in doing it, that she was only in fun. This was a very great fault, and she was soon to be made to see it.

After tea Clara and George went into the garden. They both felt a little irritated at each other: George was vexed with Clara for laughing at him in the morning, because he could not find his cap; and Clara felt annoyed that he should threaten to punish her for it. They did not talk with each other in their usual friendly way, but each one wandered around looking at the flowers. Clara was intent upon examining a rose-bush which was just coming into blossom. The sight of the sharp thorns suggested the idea of a practical joke, which she immediately proceeded to execute.

She picked a rose which had several very sharp thorns, somewhat concealed by the leaves, and running up to George, she held it out in such a manner

that he could not take it without sticking them into his fingers, and cried out: "Here, George; take this rose, quick."

She spoke in such an excited and earnest way, that George was taken by surprise. He did not know but she had hurt herself. He reached out his hand and caught the rose so firmly, that the thorns went almost their whole length into his fingers, and broke off. He threw it down with a cry of pain, and began to examine his hand.

"What's the matter?" said Clara. "Don't you like the rose? I thought you were fond of flowers."

George made no reply. But she could see by his looks that he was very angry.

"What is the matter?" she said again; "you don't seem to think much of my present."

"I will show you what is the matter," said George, taking his knife from his pocket and cutting from the same bush a long branch that was covered with the sharpest thorns.

"What are you going to do with that?" she asked, as he came towards her.

"I am going to make you a present of it. Here, take it quick," and he reached it towards her, as she had done to him.

"I shan't do any such thing," she replied. "Do you suppose I am a fool?"

"You shall take it. If you don't I will make you."

"I would like to see you do it," she replied in an angry tone. George's anger had excited her temper, and she stood facing him with a most determined and indignant look.

"You would like to see me do it, would you? Well, you shall have a chance." With these words he threw the branch with a quick and adroit motion, so that it would fall upon his sister's bare neck, unless she caught it with her hand. It was done so quickly that she had no time to catch it, and it fell upon her neck, became entangled in her hair, and hurt her cruelly. Without thinking, she grasp-

ed it firmly, and in attempting to remove it she filled her hands, as well as her neck, with the thorns. As soon as she was released from it she began to run for the house, crying with the pain.

George repented the moment he saw what he had done. Though he was very angry, he had no intention of hurting her so much. He thought she would try to catch the bush when she saw it coming, and she would only get pricked a little worse than he had been.

"Stop, Clara! stop!" he cried, running after her. "Don't tell mother; I am very sorry, I did not mean to hurt you so."

"Yes, you did; you know you did; you threw it on purpose," said Clara, sobbing and looking very angry.

"I know I threw it at you on purpose," he replied, "but I had no idea it would hurt you so badly."

"It was real mean and cruel in you to do it. See how my hands bleed."

"But you did it first. Wasn't it just as mean and cruel in you?"

"No, it wasn't; I was only in fun."

"But the thorns hurt just as much as though you did it in earnest, and meant to hurt me all you could."

"It may hurt as much; but it isn't so bad."

"It may not be as bad for you, but it is just as bad for me. They went into my hands just as far. See, it made the blood come too. What a funny sight!" And he made such a comical face that Clara smiled through her tears, and they both became good-natured.

"Let me see," said George, "how many funs I have in my hand. One, two, three, four," and he began to count them. "Four funny thorns, making holes in my hand that are not so funny."

"Let me see how many mads I have," said Clara. "Oh, dear, there are so many that I cannot count them; and they do smart so!" And she began to cry again.

"Oh, don't cry," said George, "I will put on my magic spectacles and pick them all out."

He took his knife and picked out all the thorns, very gently, making comments as he went on in the work, that kept her attention as much as possible from the pain.

"There!" he exclaimed, as he took out the last one. "The mads are all out of your hand and of my heart. Now I will attend to the funny part. There is a big one! Good-bye. "Here is his little sister, Clara! What a funny little fun it is!" There, they are all gone! The fun is gone and the mad is gone. But I am sure I can see something else."

"What is it?"

"Let me look in your hand, and I will tell you."

Clara held out her hand, which he examined with much gravity comparing it with his own. "I can't see any difference between the bloody wounds made in fun, and in anger. Both sting and bleed," he said, "and I think I can see something black around them both."

"Something black!"

"Yes."

"What can it be!"

"The spectacles must answer that! Oh! I see now. It is a fault. I think mine is the largest. But yours is black, too."

"A fault! Do you think the spectacles will show us our faults?"

"Yes, I am sure they will. They show me my faults about putting up my clothes; I can't leave anything in the wrong place now, but they cry out, 'Stop! put everything where it ought to be.'"

"I don't see why they shouldn't help us to see our mistakes in conduct as well as in our lessons. But I don't want to see my faults. They are not beautiful or pleasant in the least," said Clara.

"They're ugly enough, it is true," said George, "but if we have them, I suppose it is best to see them."

"I don't know why. What is the use in seeing

them? For my part I would be glad if they were invisible, and no one could ever discover them."

"But others will find them out in spite of us. They are always sticking out their heads and showing their ugly faces."

"Well, it is bad enough for others to see them, without looking at them ourselves."

"That is so, certainly. But when we see them we can mend them, and then they will become invisible."

"But how can we see them?"

"There are always persons enough who are ready to point them out to us."

"Yes, I know that, and so I don't think I shall look for them myself. But it always vexes me when any one points out my faults, and I begin to defend myself. So I don't think I shall trouble myself much about it."

"The faults will trouble us, whether we trouble ourselves or not. I was thinking yesterday, how

unhappy I used to be in school, and how I hated it. I could see that it was my own fault, though I thought then, that it was all owing to the school and the teachers. But I am happy enough now, though the school and the teachers are the same. So I was always getting vexed because I could not find my cap, or books, or something else when I wanted it; but I can see now that it was owing to my own carelessness. Indeed, I believe nearly all our trouble comes from our own mistakes and faults."

"That is a new idea; I thought all our troubles came from other people. I never dreamed of blaming myself; and I don't believe we are so much to blame, after all. Did these come from myself?" and she held out her hands and showed the marks of the thorns.

"Well, perhaps so, though they came from me too. If you had not pricked me, I should not have thrown the rose-bush at you."

"And if you had not been vexed and threatened

to pay me back for laughing at you this morning, I should not have pricked you. If you had put up your things, I should not have laughed at you, so it is all your fault after all."

"Yes, it is mine, and yours too; we shall have to share the blame together. But suppose you had not laughed at me?"

"Then you could not have been vexed at me for doing it. Suppose you had not threatened to take revenge upon me?"

"Then you would not have hurt me, and I should not have hurt you."

"That is so, and if neither of us had been in fault, neither of us would have been hurt. So, it seems, our faults not only injure ourselves but others."

"That is it. All our troubles and pains do come from our faults, I am sure; we can see it in this very thing we have been doing to each other, and it must be a great deal better to see and correct them than

to conceal them. They are like the thorns we had in our hands. It is better to find them and pick them out, though it does hurt some. They would hurt much more if we should let them remain."

"But what must we do? Must we get vexed and scratch each other every day to discover our faults?"

"We shall discover them fast enough if we look for them, without going to that trouble."

"If we only had a magic mirror to see them in, it would help us. But I should be afraid to look into it."

"The spectacles will give us all the help we need. But we must go into the house now, or we shall get into more trouble."

They went immediately to their rooms, and, as far as possible, removed all traces of their conflict. They had both learned an important lesson. Clara, especially, began to think of herself in a new light. The idea of examining herself for the purpose of dis-

covering her faults, had never occurred to her before. It was not a pleasant one. But she began to discover its necessity, though she could not yet see how the painful duty was to be done. We shall find in the next chapter, however, that the spectacles helped her out of this difficulty, by providing her with just such a mirror as she thought would be useful for this purpose.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW TO FIND FAULTS.—A NEW KIND OF MIRROR.—WHAT CLARA SAW IN IT.

THE next morning, as Clara was going to school, she began to think over the events of the day before. A new light seemed to dawn upon her. "Find fault with myself! That is a new idea! It is bad enough to have other people find fault with me; I can hardly bear it from mother, and it vexes me beyond measure to have my teachers and companions censure me. Find fault with myself! That would be turning against myself, and I am sure I never could do that."

"Perhaps other people would not find so much fault with you, if you should look for your bad habits yourself and remove them."

"Did you say that, my fairy?"

"Yes, I did."

This answer came into her mind so quick and clear, that she turned round as if expecting to see the old man who gave her the spectacles, at her side. But he was not there. At least she could not see him.

"The answer must come from the spectacles," she thought. "But it is all the same, for it does seem as though they could speak right out sometimes."

"It is much better to find fault with yourself, than to have others find fault with you."

"There you are again, my fairy; are you quite sure of that?"

"Yes, I am."

"If I removed them myself, other people could not see them?"

"Of course they couldn't."

"But how can I see them?"

"Look in the mirror!"

Again Clara turned her head. She was sure some

one must be near her. The ideas came into her mind so distinctly. But, if any one did speak the words, he was invisible.

"'Look in the mirror!' How absurd! How can any one see their faults by looking in a mirror? It must require a magic mirror, as well as magic glasses, to see faults, and evil dispositions."

"Look in the mirror!" The thought kept passing through her mind, "I wish I had such a mirror. But I should be afraid to look into it, I might see something so frightful."

"There are a plenty of them," was whispered in her ear.

"Where? Oh! spectacles, fairy, whoever or whatever you are, tell me where!"

"You'll find one before you get to school."

"Shall I?" This thought roused her somewhat from her reverie, and she quickened her walk, looking around at the same time, in the expectation of seeing a big looking-glass, or something of the kind.

She had not gone far before Fannie Sharp, one of the school girls, came running up to her, clapping her hands and laughing in a most excited manner.

"Oh Clara!" she cried. "We've had such fun. You ought to have been here to enjoy it."

"What is it?" Clara inquired with an eager look. Clara was fond of fun, and was always ready to have her share in it.

"You know Mary Smith, and what a timid thing she is?"

"Yes, she is afraid of her own shadow."

"When she sees a snake or a worm, she screams as if she was frightened to death. I believe she would tremble at a grasshopper."

"Yes," said Clara, "and get down upon her knees, if she had sense enough left, and beg him not to eat her up at one mouthful. But what was the fun?"

"Yesterday, some of the boys killed a little striped snake, and tied a string to it, and dragged it along

in the road, pretending it was alive, and running after them. I thought it would be a good joke to frighten Mary in the same way. So I tied some worsted threads to the string, and asked Mary to look at them. I told her I was going to work a cushion cover, and I asked her if she did not think the colors were pretty. I put my arm around her, while I was talking with her, and tied another part of the string to the belt of her dress behind her. When I had made it fast, I looked round and cried, 'Oh mercy! Mary, there's a snake.'

"'Where, where?' she asked, with a wild and frightened look.

"'Right behind you. Don't you see it?' I said.

"She caught a glimpse of it, and began to run as hard as she could.

"'It's after you, it's after you,' I shouted.

"She cast one glance over her shoulder, and seeing the snake squirming along in the path after her, she

gave a most terrible scream and ran towards the school-house as if for her life. A great many of the girls saw her. Some laughed, and others tried to stop her. She did not mind anything about them, but kept on towards the school-house, as fast as she could go. She was running so fast and thinking only of the snake, I suppose, that she did not mind where she stepped, and struck her foot against a stone and fell. We thought she would jump up and scream again and run still faster, if possible. But when the girls found that she made no attempt to get up, they ran to help. Her face was as white as a sheet. She had almost fainted, and she was trembling all over, and moaning, 'Don't let it bite me! don't let it bite me!' The girls took hold of her and lifted her up, when she looked wildly round, and cried:

"'Where is it? Where is it?'

"'It is dead,' said the girls. 'It won't hurt you.'

"'Is it really dead? Who killed it?'

"'The boys killed it yesterday,' I said. 'Don't be so silly as to be afraid of a dead snake.'

"'Oh! I thought it was alive; I am sure I saw it running after me.'

"'How could a dead snake run?' said I.

"Just before she fell the string broke, and she didn't know it was tied to her.

"'It will teach you a good lesson,' I said, 'not to be afraid of everything.'

"She was so faint she could hardly walk. One of the girls got her some water, and she went into the schoolhouse.

"But you ought to have seen her when she was running! Her bonnet fell off, her hair was streaming behind her, her eyes stuck out of her head, and she ran so fast she would have beaten a racer," and Fannie laughed as if the sight was one of the most comical ones in the world.

"Wasn't it splendid fun?" she said.

"I suppose it was fun for you, but it must have been awful for Mary."

"It served her right, she ought not to be afraid of everything," said Fannie. "Besides, it will teach her a good lesson."

"I don't know about that," said Clara.

Fannie knew that Clara was fond of a good joke, and she thought she would enter into this with as much interest as she herself did, and that they would have a hearty laugh together over it. She was somewhat disappointed, therefore, when she found Clara was rather inclined to side with Mary than with her.

"'You don't know about it!' Don't you like to have some fun as well as the rest of us?"

"Yes, I like fun, too well, perhaps. But it must have been terribly cruel for poor Mary, and it may injure her for life."

"But I was only in fun, you know; and as to injuring her, I don't believe a word of it. It will do her

good. The next time she will not be frightened at a dead snake."

Clara could not say much, because she had been guilty of the same thing in principle, the day before, in getting George to take the rose, and that was not the first instance of the kind either. Indeed Fannie would not have come to tell her about it, if she had not known that she was fond of playing the same kind of tricks.

"It must be a great trial to be so timid," said Clara, "and she must have suffered cruelly from her fright."

"Yes, but it was only in fun, you know. If I had supposed she was going to be so terribly frightened I would not have done it."

Some other girls called to Fannie and she was glad of an excuse to leave Clara, for, much to her surprise, she found she did not enter into the joke at all.

But Clara's eyes were opened. If the circumstance

had occurred two days before, Clara would have regarded it with different feelings. But the trick with the rose-bush, her conversation with George, and her own reflections just before Fannie came up, prepared her to see the matter in a very different light.

"I have found the mirror," she said to herself. "Fannie Sharp is the mirror, and I can see one of my faults in her, and a very bad one it is too. How ugly it looks!"

"Yes, there I am, as large as life, and just as ugly." And her mind ran rapidly over the whole scene. She forgot all about Fannie. It seemed as though she had done it herself. She had found the mirror. The spectacles had the wonderful power of enabling her to see herself in others. She could see her own faults, and her own virtues. She had gained a power that was to work a most wonderful and beautiful change in her own character.

"Mirrors!" she thought. "Yes, there are a plenty

of them. I am afraid I shall not see anything but my own faults, and I shall be tired to death of them."

"Well, then put them away," said the spectacles.

"Oh, yes, it is easy enough to say it, but not quite so easy to do it."

"You have taken one step, you know how to find them, and you cannot correct an evil until you see it."

"That is true, certainly."

"It is much better to see your own faults in others, than to see nothing in them but their faults."

Clara had learned one of the most important lessons of life. She had learned to think of the defects in her own character, and she had discovered how to find them. She could see just how hateful they looked in others, and then she could know how hateful they were in herself. This led her to think more kindly of others. "That is I instead of you," she would think, when she saw anything that was evil

or false in others which she knew was a part of her own character. When she saw an unselfish action, or an innocent and beautiful affection, or any accomplishment of mind or body, instead of being envious and jealous, she regarded it as an excellent example for herself. She saw what an ornament it would be to her character, and it stimulated her to do all in her power to attain it.

This attainment was not reached at once. Indeed, it was the work of many years, but she began to watch herself and found her reward in it every day.

We can assure our readers, young and old, that this gift of seeing our own defects in others, and trying to shun them; of perceiving the beauty and blessedness of what is good and true, and trying to imitate it, is far more precious than all the magical powers attributed to the whole race of ancient fairies. It is a fairy of modern times, and of a new age. It has the friendly aid of science and art, and of all that is good and true.

Clara went into the school-room and took her seat. But she could not get the idea out of her mind, "Every one of these girls is a mirror in which I can see my own faults;" and she looked round the room, expecting to see some frightful image in each one of them. But instead of that, she found that most of them had taken their books and were quietly studying their lessons. This certainly was a good example for her, and she followed it.

Nothing more of special importance occurred during the day. Clara would occasionally cast a furtive glance at one of the girls, half expecting to see herself reflected back, but as she found nothing to startle her, she went on with her studies as usual.

After school she hastened home, for she wanted to have a talk with George. As soon as she saw him she ran up to him, saying with great eagerness, "Oh, George! I've learned something new to-day; something wonderful!"

"You have! How strange! Something won-

derful! What is it? That two and two make four? That the world is flat as a pancake?" George was in excellent spirits and he felt like having a banter with every one.

"That may be new to you," said Clara, with some sharpness in her tone, "but it isn't new to me, that you are a real vexation."

"Oh, then you didn't learn that; I know what you did learn, though; you learned that sister Clara is a sweet-tempered little angel; never jokes, never says a sharp word, never laughs at her brother, and always sticks the thorns into her own fingers, and gives the flowers to him."

"That would be new, but it wouldn't be true," Clara replied, still a little irritated, "but I have learned something that is new to me, and I am sure the spectacles showed it to me."

"The spectacles! Then it must be something good, for the spectacles tell the truth. They have told me something to-day. We had the hardest sum in

arithmetic we have ever had, and there was not a boy in the class, except me, who could do it. The spectacles are truly magical. They have never failed yet when I have used them as the old beauty directed me."

"Old beauty!" exclaimed Clara, "I think he was a beauty!"

"Yes he was, I wish I could see him again. Perhaps the next time he will appear as a beautiful young woman, and then 'he' will be 'she.' I suppose the fairies can change into any form they please."

"Oh, yes, I have no doubt he will appear to you as a beautiful girl, rather than an old man; something like Sa—"

"There, you may stop, or I'll—"

"You will blush. I know what you will do; and as blushing don't become boys, I will stop."

Clara had touched a tender spot, and, even in the way of bantering, had come off victorious. George was quite willing to listen to her new discovery.

"I shall blush for you, if you don't behave better,"

said George. "But what is the great discovery? Let us hear it."

"I have learned that you are a mirror." Clara said this in a grave and earnest tone, as though she meant it.

George looked into her face, to see if her looks did not contradict her words. But they did not, and he did not know what to make of it. He thought, however, it would be best to regard it as a joke.

"A mirror!" he exclaimed. "Then I suppose my sister can see her own beautiful face and lovely nature in me!"

"No, I can't; I wish I could; I can see how bad I am sometimes, though."

"How bad you are?" said George, somewhat nettled. "What do you mean?"

"There it is again, or there I am again," said Clara, in a sad tone, as though she did not hear George's question, while she kept looking him earnestly in the face.

"There it is again! What do you mean? What do you see again?"

"I see myself," said Clara. "It is hard to find fault with one's self, isn't it?"

George now became serious and was disposed to listen for an explanation.

"You know," said Clara, "what we were talking about last night. It was really something new to me, and I could not keep from thinking about it. When I was going to school this morning, I began to see something in it, and when I was wishing I knew how to discover my own faults, it came into my mind as quick as a flash: 'Look in a mirror!'

"Then I was just as much puzzled as before. It seemed very queer to look into a mirror to discover one's faults, and I was wondering what kind of a mirror it could be, and where I could find it, when—"

"When your spectacles told you I was the mirror," interrupted George.

"Don't bother me," said Clara, "or I shall see something more in you. No, they didn't tell me any such thing. They told me I should find it before I got to school; and I did."

"Then it wasn't me, I am sure, for you didn't find me."

"No. It was Fannie Sharp."

"Fannie Sharp! She's a bright one, any way!"

Clara now commenced and told George the whole story about the snake and Mary Smith's cruel fright. She explained what she meant by the mirror; and confessed that she had seen, in Fannie's cruel trick, her own disposition to play practical jokes, and the great evil of doing it. "I don't think I would have played such a trick as Fannie did upon a little timid thing like Mary Smith," she said; "but I did almost as bad the day before to my own brother. The evil is the same, if it is not quite so great. It is in me, too. I saw how hateful it is in her, and I know it must be just as bad in me, and I am determined to get rid

of it if I can. I can't tell you how mean it makes me feel every time I think of it. I wanted to tell you all about it, because I knew you would help me, and I hurried home from school to do it. Then, when you began to banter me so, I did see myself in you, for I thought it was nearly the same thing as playing tricks. It was playing them with words, and that was what made me say that you were the mirror.".

This was something new even to George, and now they had a long and earnest talk upon the subject, that did them both much good. When brothers and sisters really begin to see their own evils, and to desire to remove them, they can be of the greatest assistance to each other in doing such an unpleasant and difficult work.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE SPECTACLES GIVE A NEW PROOF OF THEIR WONDERFUL POWER.

From this time a great change began to take place in the character and conduct of George and Clara. Indeed, the change was as great as had before been made in their habits of study. They were more gentle in their manners, and kinder to each other. They manifested greater respect for their parents, and a more earnest desire to do all in their power to assist and please them. Their parents noticed this change and were delighted with it.

George and Clara, too, were much happier than ever before. It is true they were not so wild and

boisterous in the manifestation of their feelings; but their faces were bright with the pleasant and kind affections in their hearts. They found that it was much better to try to discover their own faults, and to correct them, than to have them discovered and censured by others. They gradually learned the important lesson we are all so slow to learn, that every fault, and every evil habit, causes us much more trouble and pain when we indulge it, than it does to confess to ourselves its real character, and resolutely to overcome it.

They became discouraged sometimes, because the old habits would return, and because they saw so many selfish feelings to correct in their hearts, that it seemed as if there was no use in trying. Then the magical spectacles came to their aid. "One thing at a time," helped them wonderfully.

"I do believe," said George to Clara one day, "that there is some magical power in those words. Whenever I get discouraged or confused, this motto

comes into my mind, and I can see everything clearer at once."

"I find it so too," said Clara, "but still I do get discouraged. If you could only get rid of your faults one at a time, and they wouldn't come back again, there would be some hope. But they won't stay put away. They are worse than the weeds in the garden. When you pull one up and throw it away there is some comfort in thinking it will never grow again, even if another does come up in its place."

"But we must think of the other rules: 'Don't get discouraged,' and 'Persevere.' I thought I never should get the weeds out of my bed, and be able to keep it clean. But when the plants were grown, the weeds had no chance to grow, and I had no more trouble with them. A slim, sickly little fellow would sometimes get up under the shade of another plant; but it was soon disposed of. Perhaps it will be so with our bad habits and all our evils. But whether it will or not, I am paid a

thousand times for trying to get rid of them; I feel so much happier than I ever did before. I enjoy every minute in school. Hard lessons don't trouble me in the least; I am not afraid of the severest rules. If the teacher should make a law, that every one who whispered should be hung, it wouldn't alarm me, because I am so much interested in my lessons that I forget all about the other scholars, and have no wish to speak to anybody. I used to think the teacher was very cross, but he does not seem so now. He never scolds me, but always speaks kindly, and the boys all seem to like me better than ever before."

"Yes," said Clara, "it is just so with me. I was never so happy in my life. How much pleasanter it is at home too! Didn't I hate to sew and practise my music lesson? Even the thought of it made me unhappy all the morning. I must have made it very unpleasant for mamma too, because she had to compel me to get my lessons, and learn to sew. But it is very different now. Yesterday as I was sewing with her,

and singing, I was so happy, I suddenly looked up, and saw that her eyes were resting very earnestly upon me. When our eyes met she smiled so sweetly, it seemed as though her whole heart was in it; but she said nothing. I knew she must be happy, and I felt sure she was thinking about me. That made me happier than ever. Then I began to think what made me feel so, and something seemed to say, 'Because you are not selfish, but are trying to be good and to help your mother. The way to be happy yourself is to make others happy.'"

"That was the spectacles!" exclaimed George, "I know it was. They can speak, I am sure they can. I don't suppose any one else can hear them. But I can. They speak inside the ear somehow. They say something new to me every day; but I never thought before, that the way to be happy is to make others happy."

"Neither did I," said Clara; "it always seemed as though the way to be happy was to get things for

yourself and to have others serve you. But, according to this way, we must give things to others or try to do them good. It seemed rather strange at first, and I thought it couldn't be true. But now I am quite sure it is; for I am never so happy as when I am trying to make others happy."

"Now I think of it, I know it must be true too, for I recollect, the other day, I saw Joe Jenkins, whose parents are so poor that they can hardly get clothes to cover him, watching me while I was eating my lunch at school. I had a big apple, and when I began to eat it he looked at me as Trip sometimes does, when I am eating. I hated to give him the apple, for I wanted it myself; but he looked at me so wistfully, and at the same time the thought came into my mind, 'Give it to him!' that I could not resist it; so I said, 'Joe, you may have this apple if you want it.' He thought I was joking, at first; but when he found I was not, he held out both hands, and saying 'Thank you,' he devoured it, core,

seeds and all; I don't believe he has had an apple before this year. When he had eaten it all up and wiped his mouth on his sleeve, he looked at me with such a sense of satisfaction and gratitude, that I shall never forget it in the world. It sends a thrill through me every time I think of it, and I have enjoyed it a thousand times as much as I should if I had eaten a dozen apples. I did not then see, exactly, why it made me so happy, but I do now."

"Oh, yes, I can think of some things I have done, very much like that. I am sure the spectacles are right. Don't they help us to see things? And such good things too!"

"Yes, indeed, and I shall never cease to be thankful to the fairy who gave them to us. They are a most wonderful gift, surely."

Here the conversation ended. But the new truth, that the way to be happy is, to make others happy, was safely lodged in their minds. They had for some time been doing the work that led to this

conclusion. They had been trying to discover their own faults and evils, and to resist them. When they saw anything that was selfish, unkind, or wrong in others, they would think: "I wonder if I am like that!" and when they found any fault in themselves similar to what they saw in others, they began at once to try to get rid of it. They had succeeded very well too, as every one will, who earnestly tries to correct his faults. They had now learned the true secret of being happy, and were faithfully practising it.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SECRET OUT.

CLARA was right in her surmises about the cause of her mother's happiness. Their parents could not but notice the change that was gradually taking place in their children, and it gave them the greatest delight, though they did not know exactly how to account for it. They had always taught them to avoid evil and to be honest, truthful, and kind to others. But their instructions did not seem to have had much effect for a long time.

"I am sure," said Mr. Field one evening to his wife—"I am sure there must be something about the 'spectacles,' that we don't know."

"Spectacles!" said Mrs. Field. "What spectacles?"

"Don't you recollect, that both George and Clara have spoken several times about 'spectacles?' A few days ago I overheard them talking, in a very earnest manner, with each other: and every little while I could hear 'spectacles,' 'magical,' and sometimes 'fairy;' and once George raised his voice a little louder, and I heard: 'Oh, I know it was the spectacles. Ain't they wonderful?'"

"What do you suppose it can be?"

"I don't know, I am sure, but I think they must have come under the influence of some unusual power, and a very good one too. If some angel had taken them in his care, he could not have made a greater or better change in them than has taken place. How diligent George has been in his studies for a long time! His teacher told me, a few days ago, that he was the smartest and the best boy in school. You know he was always complaining about his

studies, and how soon he became discouraged, but now nothing seems to daunt him. And how respectful, noble, and kind he is."

"Yes, I have noticed it with the greatest delight. He seems to have changed in every respect. He used to make me so much trouble by throwing down his cap, and books, and clothes, wherever he used them last, and then he never could find them, and the whole house was thrown into an uproar. Now he puts everything in its place, and seems very considerate in his whole conduct. But there has been just as great a change in Clara. I always supposed, however, that they were joking about the spectacles."

"Well, I mean to ask them about it some time when I get a good chance. If there is anything in it I am sure they will tell us, for both of the children seem to put the utmost confidence in us."

"Yes, I am sure of that; Clara tells me all her little trials, and joys, and unburdens her whole heart

to me. A few days ago I was much surprised and delighted at a conversation I had with her, because it showed how thoughtful she was becoming. I was reading, and she came up to me, and putting one arm around my neck, said: 'Mamma! I want to ask you something.' "

"What is it?" I said.

"I want to know if I have a great many faults, and if I am very bad."

"No," I replied, "I don't think you are very bad. You have faults, and evils, as we all have, but I think you are trying to put them away."

"Yes, mamma," she said with much earnestness, "I am indeed. But I see so many evil thoughts and wrong feelings that it seems, sometimes, as if I was all bad."

"I explained to her as well as I could, how evil we are by nature, and how sinful we become by practice, and that the only way to become better is to resist our evils, and overcome them."

"But if they are so many that we can't, what shall we do then?" she replied.

"I told her we must not look at them all at once. We must drive them out little by little; if we think of one at a time and ask the Lord to help us, we shall certainly succeed. When I said 'one at a time' she started as if surprised, and then smiling she said, 'she would try.' Some company called and I had no more talk with her. But what she said showed how thoughtful she is, and that she is really trying to be good."

"I am sure of it," replied Mr. Field; "she will make a noble woman, and George will make a noble and useful man. He is pursuing the right course to do it."

A few evenings after this conversation, Mr. and Mrs. Field and the children were sitting together in the parlor, talking about some of the common topics of the day. Mr. Field took up the evening paper and began to look it over. It was badly printed and the

type was so fine that he found much difficulty in reading it.

"I shall be compelled to get some spectacles," he said, after one or two ineffectual attempts to read a short article. "By the way, George," turning to him, "perhaps you will lend me yours."

George was taken somewhat by surprise by this request, but glancing at Clara, he replied: "I would lend you mine with the greatest pleasure if I could get them out, without spoiling them. But I am afraid they would not be of much use to you or to me either, if I should take them out of my head."

The children laughed at this happy turn, but they soon grew serious, when Mr. Field asked him if he hadn't any other spectacles than his eyes.

The children looked at each other somewhat bewildered. George hesitated and colored a little, and cast upon Clara an appealing look, as if asking whether he should tell the whole story of the spectacles or not. She understood it, and, smiling, nodded her

consent. The children had discussed the propriety of telling their parents about their wonderful gift, and had concluded to do it when there was a suitable occasion. That had now come, and George, with much hesitation, replied:

"Yes, sir. I think we have some others."

"Don't you know certainly, whether you have or not?" asked his father, with a decided and searching but kind tone.

"I will tell you all about it," George replied, "and then you will know better than we do, whether we have any or not."

This answer surprised his parents not a little, and they waited with much interest to hear the disclosures he had to make.

George's hesitation arose entirely from the fear that his father might laugh at him and tell him it was all an illusion; but there was no retreat now, and he began and repeated the whole story of the spectacles, as nearly as he could recollect it. He told

them how much they were in doubt whether it was a dream or a reality, their determination to give it a thorough trial, and their success in doing it.

When George had finished his account, his father asked him why he had not told them before.

"Because," George replied, "we were not quite sure, at first, whether it was a dream or a reality, and after we were certain that we really possessed such a wonderful gift, we were almost afraid to tell, for fear you and mother wouldn't believe it. But we had resolved to tell you when we had a good chance."

"That was right," said his father. "But are you sure now, that you have these magic spectacles?"

"I am," said Clara, "and so is George. We are quite sure, for they help us every day."

"You can't take them off, nor see them?"

"No, sir. The fairy told us that we could never get them off, if they were once firmly on."

"Can't you feel them?" asked their mother.

"No, we can never feel them, but sometimes it seems as though they spoke to us."

"When I don't put up my things," said George, "I can always hear them say: 'Stop, put everything in its place,' and they keep saying it until I obey them."

"Is that what has made you so orderly lately?"

"Yes, mother, and they help us to see all kinds of faults, and to correct them."

"There must be some magical power in them, certainly," said his father, "for they have wrought a wonderful change in both of you."

The children were greatly delighted that their parents believed in their magical gift. They would have no more occasion for fear or doubt. Now they were sure of them.

"Have you never seen your fairy since?" asked Mr. Field.

"No, sir. He told us we should never see him again."

"Didn't he say anything more to you?"

"No. He only told us to take 'one thing at a time,' to 'look sharp,' and 'to persevere.'"

"That was good advice, surely," said their father, "whether he gave you anything else or not. Continue to practise those excellent precepts, especially with reference to all that is good and true, and they will do far more for you than they have yet done; and they will lead you to One who will give you wiser maxims than your fairy, and far more precious gifts than your magic spectacles."

It was now time to go to bed. George and Clara bid their parents good night and retired, highly pleased that all was now known, and the question of their wonderful gift finally settled. With the happy consciousness of this fact, and with bright hopes for the future, they went to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

MAGIC SPECTACLES, AND AID FOR ALL.—WILL YOU ACCEPT THEM?

Some years have passed since the conversation in the last chapter, and George and Clara are still rejoicing in the possession of their magic spectacles, using them to discover the evils in their own characters, and to see the truths that are necessary to the performance of their duties. Some persons laugh at them, when they insist that they have had the aid of some power besides their own, and declare that it was all a dream. They say that every one could do quite as well if they only practised the same rules faithfully and perseveringly. Perhaps my readers may be of the same opinion. I shall not attempt to

decide the question. Every one can test it for himself, and I advise all my young readers to do it. Whether they have the spectacles or not, they will find the greatest help in following the directions the old man gave to George and Clara.

"One thing at a time," is the secret which has enabled many persons to do the most difficult things. The longest canals are dug by taking up one shovelful of earth at a time. Tunnels are cut for many miles through the hardest rocks by one blow at a time, and that blow makes so little impression that we can hardly see the mark it causes. The rocks themselves, and the whole earth, were formed particle by particle, one at a time. Children think it is impossible to get their lessons, and they fail in them, because they try to think of too many things at once. Little reader, whoever you may be, when you have anything very hard to do, try the rule, "one thing at a time," and let that one thing be so small that you can do it, and you can get the hardest lessons,

and do the most difficult works. There is a wonderful power in it.

But if you do the one thing wrong, it will not help you. Don't forget the other rule, therefore, "look sharp." When you want to go to any particular place you must go in the right direction, or you will never get there, however fast you may run. Look sharp at the one thing you are trying to do, and think only of that, and you will generally be able to understand it and do it. Then you have only to practise the other rule, "persevere," to accomplish the most difficult and wonderful tasks.

Do one thing at a time; see that you do it right, keep on doing, and you cannot fail. One word of a foreign language, learned every day, will soon enable you to converse in it upon any common subject.

If the little boys and girls who may read this book, will practise for one year the three rules, which the fairy gave to George and Clara, they will be as

much surprised at their own progress as George and Clara were at theirs; and they will be much happier, at home and at school, in work and play, than they ever were before. Their parents will be delighted, and those who know will be sure that they are assisted by some power besides their own.

When we desire to do right, and try to do it, we have more powerful beings to help us than all the fairies in the world. Especially is this true when we try to discover our own faults and evils, to correct them, and to do good to others. The Lord and the angels are with us in every good work. They will give us power to do all that it is our duty to do, and make us, as well as others, happy in doing it. Whether you have the magic spectacles or not, then, you have the rules without which they are of no value, and you will have the aid of beings who know you better, who love you more, and who can and will aid you at all times, as far as you will permit them, in shunning evil, in learning the truth, and in doing good.